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ABSTRACT

OF A

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THE

PREFACE.

THE Way of inward Peace, is in all Things to be conformable to the Pleaſure and Diſpoſition of the divine Will. *In omnibus debemus ſubjicere Voluntatem noſtram Voluntati divinæ, hæ eſt enim Pax Voluntatis noſtræ, ut ſit per omnia conformis Voluntati divinæ.* Hugo Cardinalis in *Pſal.* 13. Such as would have all Things ſucceed and come to paſs according to their own Fancy, are not come to know the this Way, *Viam pacis non cognoverunt*, Pſal. 13. And therefore lead a harſh and bitter Life, always reſt-

leſs and out of Humour, without treading in the Way of Peace, which conſiſts in a total Conformity to the Will of God.

This Conformity is the ſweet Yoke that introduces us into the Regions of internal Peace and Serenity. Hence we may know, that the Rebellion of our Will, is the chief Occaſion of our Diſquiet; and that becauſe we will not ſubmit to the ſweet Yoke of the divine Will, we ſuffer ſo many Straits and Perturbations. O Soul! If we ſubmit our own to the divine Will, and to his Diſpoſition, what Tranquillity ſhould we feel! What ſweet Peace! What inward Serenity! What ſupreme Felicity, and earneſt Bliſs! This then is to be the Burden of this Book. May it pleaſe God to give me his divine Light, for diſcovering the ſecret Parts of this inward Way, and chief Felicity of perfect Peace.

PART

PART I.

Of the Darkneſs, Dryneſs, and Temptations, wherewith God purges Souls, and of internal Recollection.

CHAP. I.

To the End God may reſt in the Soul, the Heart is always to be kept peaceable in whatſoever Diſquiet, Temptations and Tribulation.

THOU art to know, that thy Soul is the Center, Habitation, and Kingdom of God. That therefore, to the end the Sovereign King may reſt on that Throne of thy Soul, thou oughteſt to take Pains to keep it clean, quiet, void and peaceable; clean from Guilt and Defects; quiet from Fears;

void of Affections, Desires and Thoughts; and peaceable in Temptations and Tribulations.

Thou oughtest always then to keep thine Heart in Peace, that thou mayest keep pure that Temple of God: and with a right and pure Intention, thou art to work, pray, obey, and suffer, without being in the least moved, whatever it pleases the Lord to send unto thee. Because it is certain, that for the good of thy Soul, and for thy spiritual Profit, he will suffer the envious Enemy to trouble that City of Rest, and Throne of Peace, with Temptations, Suggestions, and Tribulations, and by the Means of Creatures, with painful Troubles, and grievous Persecutions.

Be constant, and chear up thine Heart in whatsoever Disquiet these Tribulations may cause to thee. Enter within it, that thou mayest overcome it, for therein is the divine Fortress which defends, protects, and fights for thee. If a Man hath a safe Fortress, he is not disquieted, though his Enemies pursue him, because by retreating within it, these are disappointed and overcome. The strong Castle that will make thee triumph over all thine

Enemies, visible and invisible, and over all their Snares and Tribulations, is within thine own Soul, because in it resides the divine Aid and sovereign Succour. Retreat within it, and all will be quiet, secure, peaceable and calm.

It ought to be thy chief and continual Exercise, to pacify that Throne of thy Heart, that the supreme King may rest therein. The way to pacify it, will be to enter into thyself by Means of internal Recollection; all thy Protection is to be Prayer, and a loving Recollection in the divine Presence. When thou seest thyself more sharply assaulted, retreat into that Region of Peace, where thou wilt find the Fortress. When thou art more Faint-hearted, betake thyself to this Refuge of Prayer, the only Armour for overcoming the Enemy, and mitigating Tribulation: Thou oughtest not to be at a distance from it in a Storm, to the End thou mayest, as another *Noah*, experience Tranquillity, Security and Serenity, and to the End thy Will may be resigned, devout, peaceful, and courageous.

Finally, Be not afflicted nor discouraged to see thyself Faint-hearted, he returns to quiet thee, that still he may stir

thee, becauſe this divine Lord will be alone with thee, to reſt in thy Soul, and form therein a rich Throne of Peace; that within thine own Heart, by Means of internal Recollection, and with his heavenly Grace, thou mayeſt look for Silence in Tumult; Solitude in Company; Light in Darkneſs; Forgetfulneſs in Preſſures; Vigour in Deſpondency; Courage in Fear; Reſiſtance in Temptation; Peace in War; and Quiet in Tribulation.

CHAP. II.

Though the Soul perceive itſelf deprived of Diſcourſe, or Ratiocination, yet it ought to perſevere in Prayer, and not to be afflicted, becauſe that is its greater Felicity.

THOU wilt find thyſelf, as all other Souls that are called by the Lord to the inward Way, full of Confuſion and Doubts, becauſe in Prayer thou haſt failed in Diſcourſe: It will ſeem to thee that God does no more aſſiſt thee as formerly, that

that the Exerciſe of Prayer is not in thy Power; that thou loſeſt Time, whilſt hardly and with great Trouble thou cannot make one ſingle Ejaculation as thou was wont to do.

How much Confuſion, and what Perplexities will that want of enlarging thyſelf in mental Diſcourſe raiſe in thee? And in ſuch a Juncture thou wilt certainly conclude that thy Soul is out of order, and that for the Security of thy Conſcience, thou ſtandeſt in Need of a general Confeſſion; and all that will be got by that Care, will be the Shame and Confuſion of both. O how many Souls are called to the inward Way! and the ſpiritual Fathers, for want of Underſtanding their Caſe, inſtead of guiding and helping them forwards, ſtop them in their Courſe, and ruin them.

Thou oughteſt then to be perſuaded, that thou mayeſt not draw back, when thou wanteſt Expanſion and Diſcourſe in Prayer; that it is thy greateſt Happineſs, becauſe it is a clear Sign that the Lord will have thee to walk by Faith and Silence in his divine Preſence, which is the moſt profitable and eaſieſt Path; in Reſpect, that with a ſimple View, or

Attention to God, the Soul appears like a humble Supplicant before its Lord, or as an innocent Child, that caſts itſelf into the ſweet and ſafe Boſom of its dear Mother. Thus did *Gerſon* expreſs it; "Tho' "I have ſpent Forty Years in Reading "and Prayer, yet I could never find any "Thing more efficacious, nor compen- "dious for attaining to Myſtical Theo- "logy, than that our Spirit ſhould be- "come like a young Child and Beggar "in the Preſence of God."

That kind of Prayer is not only the eaſieſt, but the moſt ſecure; becauſe it is abſtracted from the Operations of the Imagination, that is always expoſed to the Tricks of the Devil, and the Extravagancies of Melancholy and Ratiocination, wherein the Soul is eaſily diſtracted, and being wrapt up in Speculation, reflects on itſelf.

When God had a mind to inſtruct his own Captain, *Moſes*, *Exod.* xxiv. and give him the two Tables of the Law, written in Stone, he called him up to the Mountain, at what Time God being there with him, the Mount was darkned, and environed with thick Clouds, *Moſes* ſtanding idle, not knowing what to think or

ſay.

ſay. Seven Days after, God commanded *Moſes* to come up to the top of the Mountain, wherein he ſhewed him his Glory, and filled him with great Conſolation.

So in the Beginning, when God intends after an extraordinary Manner, to guide the Soul into the School of the divine and loving Notices of the internal Law, he makes it go with Darkneſs and Dryneſs, that he may bring it near to himſelf; becauſe the divine Majeſty knows very well, that it is not by the Means of one's own Ratiocination, or Induſtry, that a Soul draws near to him, and underſtands the divine Documents; but rather by ſilent and humble Reſignation.

The Patriarch *Noah* gave a great Inſtance of this; who after he had been by all Men reckoned a Fool, floating in the middle of a raging Sea, wherewith the whole World was overflowed, without Sails and Oars, and environed with wild Beaſts, that were ſhut up in the Ark, walked by Faith alone, not knowing, nor underſtanding what God had a mind to do with him.

What moſt concerns thee, O redeemed Soul, is Patience, not to deſiſt from the Prayer

Prayer thou art about, though thou cannot enlarge in Diſcourſe. Walk with firm Faith. and a holy Silence, dying in thyſelf, with all thy natural Induſtry, truſting that GOD who is the ſame and changes not, neither can err, intends nothing but thy good. It is clear that he who is a dying, muſt needs feel it; but how well is Time employed, when the Soul is dumb and reſigned in the Preſence of GOD, there, without any Clutter or Diſtraction, to receive the divine Influences?

The Senſes are not capable of divine Bleſſings: hence, if thou wouldeſt be happy and wiſe, be ſilent and believe; ſuffer and have Patience; be confident and walk on; it concerns thee far more to hold thy Peace, and to let thyſelf be guided by the Hand of GOD, than to enjoy all the Goods of this World. And though it ſeem to thee, that thou doſt nothing at all, and art idle, being ſo dumb and reſigned; yet it is of infinite Fruit.

Conſider the blinded Beaſt that turns the Wheel of the Mill, which though it ſee not, neither know what it does, yet does a great Work in grinding the Corn: and although it taſte not of it, yet its Maſter

Maſter receives the Fruit, and taſtes of the ſame. Who would not think during ſo long a Time that the Seed lies in the Earth, but that it were loſt? Yet afterwards it is ſeen to ſpring up, grow and multiply. God does the ſame with the Soul, when he deprives it of Conſideration and Ratiocination: Whilſt it thinks it does nothing, and is in a Manner undone, in Time it comes to itſelf again, improved, diſengaged, and perfect, having never hoped for ſo much Favour.

Take Care then that thou afflict not thyſelf, nor draw back, though thou cannot enlarge thyſelf, and diſcourſe in Prayer; ſuffer, hold thy Peace, and appear in the Preſence of God; perſevere conſtantly, and truſt to his infinite Bounty, who can give unto thee conſtant Faith, true Light, and divine Grace. Walk as if thou wert blindfolded, without thinking or reaſoning; put thyſelf into his kind and paternal Hands, reſolving to do nothing but what his divine Will and Pleaſure is.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

A Sequel of the ſame Matter.

IT is the common Opinion of all the holy Men, who have treated of the Spirit, and of all the Myſtical Matters: That the Soul cannot attain to Perfection and an Union with God, by Means of Meditation and Ratiocination: Becauſe this is only good for beginning the ſpiritual Way, to the End one may acquire a Habit of Knowledge of the Beauty of Virtue, and the uglineſs of Vice.

O how are, in a manner, infinite Numbers of Souls to be pitied, who from the Beginning of their Life to the End, employ themſelves in meer Meditation, conſtraining themſelves to Reaſon, although God Almighty deprive them of Ratiocination, that he may promote them to another State, and carry them on to a more perfect kind of Prayer; and ſo for many Years they continue imperfect, and in the Beginning, without any Progreſs, or having as yet made one Step in the Way of the Spirit; beating their Brains about

about the Frame of the Place, the choice of the Minutes, Imaginations, and ſtrained Reaſonings, ſeeking GOD without, when in the mean Time they have him within themſelves.

Auſtin complained of that, in the Time when GOD led him to the Myſtical Way, ſaying to his divine Majeſty, "I, Lord, "went wandring like a ſtrayed Sheep, "ſeeking Thee with anxious Reaſoning "without, whilſt Thou waſt within me; "I wearied myſelf much in looking "for Thee without, and yet Thou haſt "thy Habitation within me, if I long "and breathe after thee. I went round "the Streets and Places of the City of "this World, ſeeking Thee, and found "Thee not; becauſe in vain I ſought "without for him, who was within my-"ſelf." *Soliloq* c. 31.

Thomas, for all he was ſo circumſpect in his Writings, may ſeem yet to jeer thoſe, who go always in ſearch of GOD without, by Means of Ratiocination, when they have him preſent within themſelves. "There is great Blindneſs, and "exceſſive Folly in ſome (ſays he) who "always ſeek GOD, continually ſigh "after GOD, often long for GOD, invo-

"cate

" cate and call upon GOD daily in Pray-
" er; they themſelves (according to the
" Apoſtle) being the living Temple of
" GOD, and his true Habitation, ſince
" their Soul is the Seat and Throne of
" GOD, where he continually reſts.
" Who then but a Fool will look for
" an Inſtrument abroad, which he knows
" he has faſt ſhut up within Doors? Or,
" who can refreſh himſelf with the Food
" he deſires, and yet not taſte it? Such
" exactly is the Life of ſome juſt Men,
" always ſeeking, and never enjoying,
" and therefore all their Works are im-
" perfect." *Opuſc.* 63. c. 3. *in fin.*

It is certain, that our Lord CHRIST taught Perfection to all, and ever will have all to be Perfect, particularly the ignorant and ſimple. He clearly manifeſted this Truth, when for his Apoſtles he choſe the ſmalleſt and moſt ignorant, ſaying to his eternal Father, *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, becauſe thou haſt hid theſe Things from the Wiſe and Prudent, and haſt revealed them unto Babes*, Matt. xi. and it is certain, that theſe cannot acquire Perfection, by acute Meditations, and ſubtle Reaſonings, though they be as capable as the moſt learned

learned to attain to Perfection, by the Affections of the Will, wherein principally it conſiſts.

Bonaventure teaches us not to form Conceptions of any Thing, no not of God, becauſe it is Imperfection to make Repreſentations, Images and Ideas, how ſubtle or ingenious ſoever, either of the Will, or of the Goodneſs, Trinity and Unity; nay, of the divine Eſſence itſelf: In reſpect that though all theſe Repreſentations appear *Deiform*, yet are they not God, who admits of no Image or Form. *Non ibi oportet cogitare res de Creaturis nec de Angelis, nec de Trinitate, quid hæc Sapientia, per affectus deſideriorum, non per Meditationem, prævium debet conſurgere.* Myſt. Theol. p. 2. q Un. p. 685. We muſt not here think any Thing of Creatures, of Angels, nor of God himſelf, becauſe that Wiſdom and Perfection is not acquired by nice and quaint Meditation, but by the Deſire and Affection of the Will.

Wouldeſt thou diſquiet thyſelf, and leave off Prayer, becauſe thou knoweſt not, or cannot tell how to enlarge therein, though thou mayeſt have a good Will, good Deſire, and pure Intention? If the young

young Ravens, forſaken of the old, becauſe ſeeing them without black Feathers, they think them ſpurious, are by the Dew of Heaven fed, that they may not periſh; what will he do to redeemed Souls, though they cannot ſpeak nor reaſon, if they believe, truſt, and open their Mouths to Heaven, declaring their Wants? Is it not more certain that the divine Bounty will provide for them, and give them their neceſſary Food?

Manifeſt it is, that it is a great Martyrdom, and no ſmall Gift of God, for the Soul, finding itſelf deprived of the ſenſible Pleaſures it had, to walk by holy Faith only, through the dark and deſart Paths of Perfection, to which, notwithſtanding it can never attain, but by this painful, though ſecure Means. Wherefore endeavour to be conſtant, and not draw back; though Diſcourſe be wanting to thee in Prayer, believe at that Time firmly, be quietly ſilent, and patiently perſevere, if thou wouldeſt be happy, and attain to the divine Union, eminent Reſt, and to the ſupreme internal Peace.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

The Soul is not to afflict itſelf, nor intermit Prayer, becauſe it ſees itſelf encompaſſed with Dryneſs.

THOU ſhalt know that there are two ſorts of Prayer, the one tender, delightful, amiable, and full of Sentiments; the other obſcure, dry, deſolate, tempted and darkſome. The firſt is of Beginners, the ſecond of Proficients, who are in the progreſs to Perfection. GOD gives the firſt to gain Souls, the ſecond to purify them. With the firſt he uſes them like Children; with the ſecond he begins to deal with them as with ſtrong Men.

The firſt Way may be called the animal Life, and belongs to them who go in the Tract of the ſenſible Devotion, which GOD uſes to give to Beginners, to the End that being endowed with that ſmall Reliſh, as the natural Man is with the ſenſible Object, they may addict themſelves

themſelves to the ſpiritual Life. The ſecond is called the Life of Men, and belongs to thoſe, who not minding ſenſible Pleaſures, fight and war againſt their own Paſſions, that they may conquer and obtain Perfection, the proper employment of Men.

Aſſure thyſelf, that dryneſs or aridity is the Inſtrument of thy good, becauſe it is nothing elſe but a Want of Senſibility, that *Remora* which puts a Stop to the Flight of almoſt all ſpiritual Men, and makes them even draw back, and leave off Prayer: As may be ſeen in many Souls, which only perſevere whilſt they taſte ſenſible Conſolation.

Know that the Lord makes uſe of the Vail of Dryneſs, to the End we may not know what he is working in us, and ſo be humble; becauſe if we felt and knew what he is working in our Souls, Satisfaction and Preſumption would get in, imagining that we were doing ſome good Thing, and reckoning ourſelves very near to God; which would be our undoing.

Lay this down as a firm Ground in thine Heart, that for walking in the inward Way, all Senſibility ſhould firſt be removed;

removed; and that the Means God uſes for that, is Dryneſs. By that alſo he takes away Reflection, or that View whereby the Soul eyes what it is doing, the only Impediment that obſtructs the advancing forward, and God's communicating himſelf, and operating in it.

Thou oughteſt not then to afflict thyſelf, nor think that thou reapeſt no Fruit, becauſe in coming from Prayer, thou haſt not the Experience of many Sentiments, ſince that is a manifeſt Cheat. The Huſbandman ſows in one Time, and reaps in another: So God, upon Occaſions, and in his own due Time, will help thee to reſiſt Temptation, and when leaſt thou thinkeſt, will give thee holy Purpoſes, and more effectual Deſires of ſerving him. And to the End thou mayeſt not ſuffer thyſelf to be transported by the violent Suggeſtions of the Enemy, who will enviouſly perſuade thee, that thou doſt nothing, and that thou loſeſt Time, that ſo thou mayeſt neglect Prayer: I will declare to thee ſome of the infinite Fruits that thy Soul reaps from that great Dryneſs.

The firſt is to perſevere in Prayer, from which Fruit ſpring many other Advantages.

2. Thou wilt find a loathing of the Things of the World, which by little and little tends to the ſtifling of the bad Deſires of thy paſt Life, and the producing of other new Ones of ſerving God.

3. Thou wilt reflect upon many Failings, on which formerly thou didſt not reflect.

4. Thou wilt find, when thou art about to commit any Evil, an advertency in thy Heart, which reſtrains thee from the Execution of it, and at other Times from ſpeaking, lamenting, or revenging thyſelf; that will take thee off from ſome little earthly Pleaſure, or from this or the other Occaſion, or Converſation, into which formerly thou waſt running in great Peace and Security, without the leaſt Check or Remorſe of Conſcience.

5. After that through Frailty thou haſt fallen into ſome light Fault, thou wilt feel a Reproof for it in thy Soul, which will exceedingly afflict thee.

6. Thou wilt feel within thyſelf, Deſires of ſuffering, and of doing the Will of God.

7. An

7. An Inclination to Virtue, and greater Eaſe in overcoming thyſelf, and conquering the Difficulties of the Paſſions, and Enemies that hinder thee in the Way.

8. Thou wilt know thyſelf better, and be confounded alſo in thyſelf, feel in thee a high Eſteem of God above all created Beings, a contempt of Creatures, and a firm Reſolution not to abandon Prayer, though thou knoweſt that it will prove to thee a moſt arduous Taſk.

9. Thou wilt be ſenſible of greater Peace in thy Soul, Love to Humility, Confidence in God, Submiſſion and Abſtraction from all Creatures; and finally, the Sins thou haſt omitted ſince the Time thou exerciſedſt thyſelf in Prayer, are ſo many Signs, that the Lord is working in thy Soul, (though thou knoweſt it not) by Means of dry Prayer; and although thou feeleſt it not whilſt thou art in Prayer, thou wilt feel it in his due Time, when he ſhall think it fit.

All theſe, and many other Fruits, are like new Buds that ſpring from the Prayer which thou wouldeſt give over, becauſe it ſeems to thee to be dry, that thou ſeeſt no Fruit of it, nor reapeſt no

Advantage therefrom. Be conſtant and perſevere with Patience, for though thou knoweſt it not, thy Soul is profited thereby.

It is not to be ſaid, that the Soul is idle; becauſe though it operate not *actively*, yet the Holy Ghoſt operates in it. Beſides, that it is not without all activity, becauſe it operates, though ſpiritually, ſimply and intimately. For to be attentive to God, draw near to him, to follow his internal Inſpirations, receive his divine Influences, adore him in his own intimate Center, reverence him with the pious Affections of the Will, to caſt away ſo many and ſo fantaſtical Imaginations, and with ſoftneſs and contempt to overcome ſo many Temptations: All theſe, I ſay, are true Acts, though ſimple, wholly ſpiritual, and in a Manner imperceptible, through the great Tranquillity wherewith the Soul exerts them.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

The Soul is not to be diſquieted, that it ſees itſelf encompaſſed with Darkneſs, becauſe that is an Inſtrument of its greater Felicity.

THERE are two Sorts of Darkneſs: Some unhappy, and others happy: The firſt are ſuch as ariſe from Sin, and are unhappy, becauſe they lead the Soul to an eternal Precipice. The ſecond are thoſe which the Lord ſuffers to be in the Soul, to ground and ſettle it in Virtue; and theſe are happy, becauſe they enlighten it, fortify it, and cauſe greater Light therein, ſo that thou oughteſt not to grieve and diſturb thyſelf, nor be diſconſolate in ſeeing thyſelf obſcure and darkſome, judging that GOD hath failed thee, and the Light alſo that thou formerly hadſt the Experience of; thou oughteſt rather at that Time perſevere conſtantly in Prayer, it being a manifeſt Sign that GOD of his infinite Mercy intends to bring thee into the inward Path, and happy Way of Paradiſe. O how happy wilt thou be, if thou em-

brace it with Peace and Reſignation, as the Inſtrument of perfect Quiet, true Light, and of all thy ſpiritual good.

Know then, that the ſtraiteſt, moſt perfect and ſecure Way of Proficients, is the Way of Darkneſs; becauſe in them the Lord placed his own Throne; and *he made Darkneſs his ſecret Place*, Pſal. xviii. by them the ſupernatural Light, which God infuſes into the Soul, grows and increaſes; amidſt them, Wiſdom and ſtrong Love are begotten; by Darkneſs the Soul is annihilated, and the *Species*, which hinders the right View of the divine Truth, are conſumed. By this Means God introduces the Soul by the inward Way into the Prayer of Reſt, and of perfect Contemplation, which ſo few have the Experience of. Finally, by Darkneſs the Lord purges the Senſes and Senſibility, which hinder the Myſtical Progreſs.

See now if Darkneſs be not to be eſteemed and embraced. What thou oughteſt to do amidſt them, is to believe that thou art before the Lord, and in his Preſence; but thou oughteſt to do ſo, with a ſweet and quiet Attention; not deſire to know any Thing, nor ſearch after Delicacies,

licacies, Tenderneſſes, or ſenſible Devotions, nor do any Thing but what is the good Will and Pleaſure of God; becauſe otherwiſe thou wilt only make Circles all thy Life-time, and not advance one Step towards Perfection.

CHAP. VI.

To the End the Soul may attain to the ſupreme internal Peace, it is neceſſary that God purge it after his Way, becauſe the Exerciſes and Mortifications that of itſelf it ſets about, are not ſufficient.

SO ſoon as thou ſhalt firmly reſolve to mortify thy external Senſes, that thou mayeſt advance towards the high Mountain of Perfection and Union with God; his divine Majeſty will ſet his Hand to the purging of thy evil Inclinations, inordinate Deſires, vain Complacency, Self-love and Pride, and other hidden Vices, which thou knoweſt not, and yet reign in the inner Parts of thy Soul, and hinder the divine Union.

Thou wilt never attain to this happy State, though thou tire thyſelf out with the external Acts of Mortification and Reſignation, until the Lord purge thee inwardly, and diſcipline thee after his own Way, becauſe he alone knows how ſecret Faults are to be purged out. If thou perſevere conſtantly, he will not only purge thee from Affections and Engagements to natural and temporal Goods, but in his own Time alſo he will purify thee with the ſupernatural and ſublime; ſuch as are internal Communications, inward Raptures and Extaſies, and other infuſed Graces, on which the Soul reſts and enjoys itſelf.

God will do all this in thy Soul by Means of the Croſs and Dryneſs, if thou freely giveſt thy Conſent to it by Reſignation, and walking through thoſe darkſome and deſert Ways. All thou haſt to do, is to do nothing by thy own Choice alone. The Subjection of thy Liberty, is that which thou oughteſt to do, quietly reſigning thyſelf up in every Thing, whereby the Lord ſhall think fit internally and externally to mortify thee: becauſe that is the only Means by which thy Soul can become capable of the divine Influences, whilſt

whilſt thou ſuffereſt internal and external Tribulation, with Humility, Patience and Quiet ; not the Penances, Diſciplines, and Mortifications which thou couldeſt impoſe on thyſelf.

The Huſbandman ſets a greater Eſteem upon the Plants which he ſows in the Ground, than thoſe that ſpring up of themſelves, becauſe theſe never come to ſeaſonable Maturity. In the ſame Manner God eſteems, and is better pleaſed with, the Virtue which he ſows and infuſes into the Soul, (as being ſunk into its own Nothingneſs, calm and quiet, retreated within its own Center, and without any Election) than all the other Virtues which the Soul pretends to acquire by its own Election and Endeavours.

It concerns thee only then, to prepare thine Heart like clean Paper, wherein the divine Wiſdom may imprint Characters to his own liking. O how great a Work will it be for thy Soul to be whole Hours together in Prayer, dumb, reſigned and humble, without acting, knowing, or deſiring to underſtand any Thing.

CHAP. VII.

A Sequel of the ſame.

WITH new Efforts thou wilt exerciſe thyſelf, but in another Manner than hitherto, giving thy Conſent to receive the ſecret and divine Operations, and to be poliſhed and purified by the Lord, which is the only Means whereby thou wilt become clean and purged from thy Ignorance and Diſſolutions. Know, however, that thou art to be plunged in a bitter Sea of Sorrows, and of internal and external Pains, which Torment will pierce into the moſt inward Part of thy Soul and Body.

Thou wilt experience, that the Creatures will forſake thee, nay, thoſe too from which thou hopedſt for moſt Favour and Compaſſion in thy ſtraits; the Brooks of thy Faculties will be ſo dried up, that thou ſhalt not be able to form any Ratiocination; nay, nor ſo much as to conceive a good Thought of GOD. Heaven will ſeem to thee to be of Braſs, and thou ſhalt receive no Light from it. Nor will the Thought comfort thee, that in Times paſt ſo much Light and devout Conſolation hath ſhined into thy Soul.

The invisible Enemies will pursue thee with Scruples, lascivious Suggestions, and unclean Thoughts, with Incentives to Impatience, Pride, Rage, cursing and blaspheming the Name of God. Thou wilt find a great Lukewarmness, loathing and wearisomness for the Things of God; an Obscurity and Darkness in thy Understanding; a Faintness, Confusion, and Narrowness of Heart; such a Coldness and Feebleness of the Will to resist, that a Straw will appear to thee a Beam. Thy Desertion will be so great, that thou wilt think there is no more a God for thee, and that thou art rendered incapable of entertaining a good Desire; so that thou wilt continue shut up between two Walls, in constant Straits and Anguish, without any Hopes of ever getting out of so dreadful an Oppression.

But fear not: All this is necessary for purging thy Soul, and making it know its own Misery, and sensibly perceive the Annihilation of all the Passions and disordinate Appetites, wherewith it rejoiced itself. Finally, to the End the Lord may refine and purify thee after his own Manner with those inward Torments, wilt thou not cast the *Jonas* of Sense into the

Sea, that thereby thou mayeſt procure it? With all thy outward Diſciplines and Mortifications, thou wilt never have true Light, nor make one Step towards Perfection; ſo that thou wilt ſtop in the Beginning, and thy Soul will not attain to the amiable Reſt, and ſupreme internal Peace.

CHAP. VIII.

The Soul ought not to be diſquieted, nor draw back in the ſpiritual Way, becauſe it finds itſelf aſſaulted by Temptations.

OUR own Nature is ſo baſe, proud and ambitious, and ſo full of its own Appetites, its own Judgment and Opinions, that if Temptations reſtrained it not, it would be undone without Remedy. The Lord then ſeeing our Miſery and perverſe Inclination, and thereby moved to Compaſſion, ſuffers us to be aſſaulted by divers Thoughts againſt the Faith, horrible Temptations, and by violent and painful Suggeſtions of Impatience,

tience, Pride, Gluttony, Luxury, Rage, Blaſphemy, Curſing, Deſpair, and an infinite Number of others, to the End we may know ourſelves and be humble. With theſe horrible Temptations, that infinite Goodneſs humbles our Pride, giving us in them the moſt wholeſome Medicine.

All our Righteouſneſs (as *Iſaiah* ſaith, chap. lxiv. 6.) *are as filthy Rags*, through the Stains of Vanity, Conceitedneſs, and Self-love. It is neceſſary they be purified with the Fire of Tribulation and Temptation, that ſo they may be clean, pure, perfect, and agreeable to the Eyes of God.

Therefore the Lord purifies the Soul which he calls, and will have for himſelf, with the rough File of Temptation, with which he poliſhes it from the Ruſt of Pride, Avarice, Vanity, Ambition, Preſumption, and Self conceitedneſs. With the ſame he humbles, pacifies and exerciſes it, making it to know its own Miſery. By Means thereof he purifies and ſtrips the Heart, to the End all its Operations may be pure, and of ineſtimable Value.

Many Souls, when they ſuffer thoſe painful Torments, are troubled, afflicted

and diſquieted, it ſeeming to them, that they begin already in this Life to ſuffer eternal Puniſhments; and if by Misfortune they go to an unexperienced Confeſſor, inſtead of comforting them, he leaves them in greater Confuſion and Perplexities.

That thou mayeſt not loſe internal Peace, it is neceſſary thou believe that it is the Goodneſs of divine Mercy, when thus it humbles, afflicts and tries thee; ſince by that Means thy Soul comes to have a deep Knowledge of itſelf, reckoning itſelf the worſt, moſt impious and abominable of all Souls living, and hence with Humility and Lowlineſs it abhors itſelf. O how happy would Souls be, if they would be quiet, and believe that all theſe Temptations are cauſed by the Devil, and received from the Hand of God, for their Gain and ſpiritual Profit.

But thou wilt ſay, that it is not the Work of the Devil, when he moleſts thee by Means of Creatures, but the Effects of thy Neighbour's Faults and Malice, in having wronged and injured thee. Know that that is another cunning and hidden Temptation, becauſe though God wills not the Sin of another, yet he wills his

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own Effects in thee, and the Trouble which accrues to thee from another's Faults, that he may ſee thee improved by the Benefit of Patience.

Doſt thou receive an Injury from any Man? There are two Things in it, the Sin of him that does it, and the Puniſhment that thou ſuffereſt; this Sin is againſt the Will of God, and diſpleaſes him, though he permit it; the Puniſhment is conformable to his Will, and he wills it for thy Good; wherefore thou oughteſt to receive it as from his Hand. The Paſſion and Death of our Lord CHRIST, were the Effects of the Wickedneſs and Sins of *Pilate*, and yet it is certain, that GOD willed the Death of his own Son for our Redemption.

Conſider how the Lord makes uſe of another's Fault for the Good of thy Soul. O the Greatneſs of the divine Wiſdom! Who can pry into the Depth of the ſecret and extraordinary Means, and the hidden Parts whereby he guides the Soul, which he would have purged, transformed and dignified?

CHAP. IX.

Wherein the ſame Point is handled.

THAT the Soul may be the Habitation of the celeſtial King, it is neceſſary that it ſhould be pure, and without any Blemiſh; wherefore the Lord purifies it as Gold in the Furnace of terrible and grievous Temptations. Certain it is, that the Soul never loves, nor believes more, than when it is afflicted and baited with ſuch Temptations; becauſe thoſe Doubtings and Fears that beſet it, whether it believes or not, whether it conſent or not, are nothing elſe but the Quaintneſſes of Love.

The Effects that remain in the Soul makes this very clear; and commonly theſe are a loathing of itſelf, with a moſt profound Acknowledgment of the Greatneſs and Omnipotence of GOD; a great Confidence in the Lord, that he will deliver it from all Riſk and Danger; believing and confeſſing with far greater Vigour of Faith, that it is GOD who gives it Strength to bear the Torments of theſe Temptations, becauſe it would naturally

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be impoſſible, conſidering the Force and Violence wherewith ſometimes they attack, to reſiſt one Quarter of an Hour.

Thou art to know then, that Temptation is thy great Happineſs; ſo that the more it beſets thee, the more thou oughteſt to rejoice in Peace, inſtead of being ſad, and thank God for the Favour he does thee. In all thoſe Temptations and odious Thoughts, the Remedy that is to work, is to deſpiſe them with a ſtayed Neglect, becauſe nothing more afflicts the proud Devil, than to ſee that he is ſlighted and deſpiſed, as are all Things elſe that he ſuggeſts to us. And therefore thou art to tarry with him, as one that perceives him not, and to poſſeſs thyſelf in thy Peace without repining, and without multiplying Reaſons and Anſwers; ſeeing nothing is more dangerous, than to vie in Reaſons with him who is ready to deceive thee.

The Saints in arriving at Holineſs, paſſed through this doleful Valley of Temptations; and the greater Saints they were, the greater Temptations they grapled with. Nay, after the Saints have attained to Holineſs and Perfection, the Lord ſuffers them to be tempted with

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briſk Temptations, that their Crown may be the greater, and that the Spirit of Vain-glory may be checked, or elſe hindred from entring in them; keeping them in that Manner ſecure, humble, and ſolicitous of their Condition.

Finally, Thou art to know, that the greateſt Temptation is to be without Temptation; wherefore thou oughteſt to be glad when it aſſaults thee, and with Reſignation, Peace, and Conſtancy, reſiſt it: Becauſe if thou wilt ſerve God, and arrive at the ſublime Region of internal Peace, thou muſt paſs through that rugged Path of Temptation; put on that happy Armour; fight in that fierce and cruel War; and in that burning Furnace, poliſh, purge, renew, and purify thyſelf.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Declaring the Nature of internal Recollection, and inſtructing the Soul how it ought to behave itſelf therein, and the ſpiritual Warfare, whereby the Devil endeavours to diſturb it at that Time.

INternal Recollection is Faith, and Silence in the Preſence of God. Hence thou oughteſt to be accuſtomed to recollect thyſelf in his Preſence, with an affectionate Attention, as one that is given up to God, and united unto him, with Reverence, Humility and Submiſſion, beholding him in the moſt inward Receſs of thine own Soul, without Form, Likeneſs, Manner, or Figure; in the View and general Nature of a living and obſcure Faith, without any Diſtinction of Perfection or Attribute.

There thou art to be with Attention, and a ſincere Regard, with a ſedate Heedfulneſs, and full of Love towards the Lord, reſigning and delivering thyſelf up into his Hands, to the End he may diſpoſe of thee according to his good Will

Will and Pleaſure, without reflecting on thyſelf; nay, nor on Perfection itſelf. Here thou art to ſhut up the Senſes, truſting God with all the Care of thy Welfare, and minding nothing of the Affairs of this Life. Finally, thy Faith ought to be pure, without Repreſentations or Likeneſs; ſimple, without Reaſonings; and univerſal, without Diſtinctions.

The Prayer of internal Recollection, may be well typified by that Wreſtling, which the holy Scriptures ſay the Patriarch *Jacob* had all Night with God, until Day broke, and he bleſſed him. Wherefore the Soul is to perſevere, and wreſtle with the Difficulties that it will find in internal Recollection, without deſiſting, until the Sun of internal Light begin to appear, and the Lord give it his Bleſſing.

No ſooner wilt thou have given thyſelf up to thy Lord in this inward Way, but all Hell will conſpire againſt thee; ſeeing one ſingle Soul inwardly retired to its own Preſence, makes greater War againſt the Enemy, than a thouſand others that walk externally; becauſe the Devil makes an infinite Advantage of overcoming an internal Soul.

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In the Time of the Recollection, Peace and Reſignation of thy Soul, God will more eſteem the various, impertinent, troubleſome and ugly Thoughts in that thou haſt; than the good Purpoſes, and high Sentiments. Know that the Effort which thou thyſelf mayeſt make to reſiſt Thoughts, is an Impediment, and will leave thy Soul in greater Anxiety. The beſt Thing that is to be done, is ſweetly to deſpiſe them, to know thine own wretchedneſs, and peacefully make an Offering to God of the Trouble.

Though thou cannot get rid of the Anguiſh of Thoughts, haſt no Light, Comfort, nor ſpiritual Sentiment; yet be not afflicted, neither leave off Recollection, becauſe they are the Snares of the Enemy: Reſign thyſelf at that Time with Vigour, endure with Patience, and perſevere in his Preſence; for whilſt thou perſevereſt after that Manner, thy Soul will be internally improved.

Doſt thou believe that when thou comeſt away from Prayer dry, in the ſame Manner as thou began in, that that was becauſe of Want of Preparation, and that it hath done thee no Good: That is a Fallacy; becauſe the Fruit of true

Prayer

Prayer conſiſts not in enjoying the Light, nor in having Knowledge of ſpiritual Things, ſince thoſe may be found in a ſpeculative Intellect, without true Virtue and Perfection; it only conſiſts in enduring with Patience, and perſevering in Faith and Silence, believing that thou art in the Lord's Preſence, turning to him thy Heart with Tranquillity and Purity of Mind. So whilſt thou perſevereſt in this Manner, thou wilt have the only Preparation and Diſpoſition which at that Time is neceſſary; and ſhalt reap infinite Fruit.

War is very uſual in this internal Recollection, which on the one Hand will deprive thee of Senſibility, to try, humble and purge thee. On the other, inviſible Enemies will aſſault thee with continual Suggeſtions, to trouble and diſquiet thee. Nature herſelf, apparently, will torment thee, ſhe being always an Enemy to the Spirit, which in depriving her of ſenſible Pleaſures, remain weak, melancholy, and full of irkſomeneſs, ſo that it feels a Hell in all ſpiritual Exerciſes, particularly in that of Prayer; hence it grows extremely impatient to be at an End of it, through the Uneaſineſs of Thoughts,

Thoughts, the laſſitude of Body, importunate Sleep, and thou not being able to curb the Senſes, every one of which would for its own Share follow its own Pleaſure. Happy art thou if thou canſt perſevere amidſt this painful Trial.

Tereſa, confirms all this by her heavenly Doctrine, in the Letter ſhe wrote to the Biſhop of *Oſmia*, to inſtruct him how he was to behave himſelf in Prayer, and in the Variety of troubleſome Thoughts, which attack us at that Time; where ſhe ſays, "There is a Neceſſity of ſuffering the Trouble of a Troop of Thoughts, importune Imaginations and the Impetuoſities of natural Notions, not only of the Soul, through the Dryneſs and Diſunion it hath, but of the Body alſo, occaſioned by the Want of Submiſſion to the Spirit, which it ought to have." viii. of her *Epiſtolary*.

Theſe are called Dryneſſes in Spirituals, but are very profitable, if they be embraced and ſuffered with Patience. Whoſoever ſhall accuſtom himſelf to ſuffer them without repining, will from that Labour draw vaſt Advantage. It is certain, that in Recollection the Devil frequently charges the Soul more fiercely with

with a Battalion of Thoughts, to diſcomfit the quiet of the Soul, and alienate it from that moſt ſweet and ſecure internal Converſation, raiſing Horrors, to the End it may leave it off, reducing it moſt commonly to ſuch a State, as if it were led forth to a moſt rigorous Torment.

" The Birds, which are the Devils, " knowing this (ſaid the above-cited Let- " ter) pricks and moleſts the Soul with " Imaginations, troubleſome Thoughts, " and the Interruptions which the Devil " at that Time brings in, tranſporting " the Thoughts, diſtracting them from " one Thing to another; and after he " had done with them, attacking the " Heart; and it is no ſmall Fruit of " Prayer, patiently to ſuffer theſe Trou- " bles and Importunities. That is an " Offering up of one's ſelf in a whole " Burnt ſacrifice, that is to ſay, to be " wholly conſumed in the Fire of Temp- " tation, and no Part ſpared." See how this heavenly Women encourages to ſuffer and endure Thoughts and Temptations; becauſe, provided they be not conſented to, they double the Profit.

As many Times as thou exerciſeſt thyſelf calmly to reject theſe vain Thoughts,

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ſo many Crowns will the Lord ſet upon thy Head; and though it may ſeem to thee that thou doſt nothing; be undeceived, for a good Deſire, with Firmneſs and Stedfaſtneſs in Prayer, is very pleaſing to the Lord.

"Wherefore to be there (concludes "ſhe) without ſenſible Profit, is not loſt "Time; but of great Gain, whilſt one "toils without Intereſt, and merely for "the Glory of GOD; and though it "may ſeem to be toiling in vain, yet it "is not ſo; but it is as with Children, "who toil and labour under the Power "of their Fathers, though in the Evening "they receive not the Wages for their "Day's Work, yet at the Year's End "they enjoy all."

CHAP. XI.

A Sequel of the ſame Matter.

GOD loves not him who does moſt, who hears moſt, nor who ſhews greateſt Affection, but who ſuffers moſt, if he pray with Faith and Reverence, believing that he is in the divine Preſcence.

ſence. The Truth is, to take from the Soul the Prayer of the Senſes, and of Nature, is a rigorous ſevere Pain to it; but the Lord rejoices, and is glad in its Peace, if it be thus quiet and reſigned. Uſe not at that Time vocal Prayer, becauſe however it be good and holy in itſelf, yet to uſe it then is a manifeſt Temptation, whereby the Enemy pretends, that God ſpeaks not to thy Heart, under pretext that thou haſt not Sentiments, and that thou loſeſt Time.

God hath no regard to the Multitude of Words, but to the Purity of the Intent. His greateſt Content and Glory at that Time, is, to ſee the Soul in Silence, deſirous, humble, quiet and reſigned. Proceed, perſevere, pray, and hold thy Peace; for where thou findeſt not a Sentiment, thou wilt find a Door whereby thou mayeſt enter into thine own Nothingneſs; knowing thyſelf to be nothing, that thou canſt do nothing; nay, and that thou haſt not ſo much as a good Thought.

How many have begun this happy Practice of Prayer and internal Recollection, and have left it off, pretending that they felt no Pleaſure, that they loſe Time, that their Thoughts trouble them, and that

that that Prayer is not for them, whilſt they find not any Sentiment of GOD, nor any Ability to Reaſon or Diſcourſe; whereas they might have believed, been ſilent, and had Patience. All this is no more but with Ingratitude to hunt after ſenſible Pleaſures, ſuffering themſelves to be tranſported with Self-love, ſeeking themſelves, and not GOD, becauſe they cannot ſuffer a little Pain and Dryneſs, without reflecting on the infinite Loſs they ſuſtain; whereas by the leaſt Act of Reverence towards GOD, amidſt Dryneſs and Sterility, they receive an eternal Reward.

The Lord intimated to *Franceſca Lopaz* of *Valenza*, three Things of great Light and Conſequence in order to internal Recollection: " In the firſt Place, " That a Quarter of an Hour of Prayer, " with Recollection of the Senſes and " Faculties, and with Reſignation and " Humility, does more good to the Soul, " than five Days of penitential Exer- " ciſes, Hair-clothes, Diſciplines, Faſt- " ings, and ſleeping on bare Boards, " becauſe theſe are only Mortifications " of the Body, but with Recollection the " Soul is purified.

" Secondly,

" Secondly, That it is more pleaſing " to the divine Majeſty, to have the " Soul in quiet and devout Prayer for " the Space of an Hour, than to go on " great Pilgrimages ; becauſe that in " Prayer it does good to itſelf, and to " thoſe for whom it prays, gives De- " light to GOD, and merits a high De- " gree of Glory ; but in Pilgrimage, " commonly, the Soul is diſtracted, and " the Senſes diverted, with a Debilita- " tion of Virtue, beſides many other " Dangers."

" Thirdly, That conſtant Prayer was " to keep the Heart always right to- " wards GOD : and that a Soul, to be in- " ternal, ought rather to act with the " Affection of the Will, than the Toil of " the Intellect." All this to be read in her Life.

The more the Soul rejoices in ſenſible Love, the leſs Delight GOD has in it; on the contrary, the leſs the Soul rejoices in this ſenſible Love, the more GOD delights in it. And know, that to fix the Will on GOD, reſtraining Thoughts and Temptations, with the greateſt Tranquillity poſſible, is the higheſt Pitch of praying.

I will conclude this Chapter by undeceiving thee of the vulgar Error of thoſe who ſay, that in this internal Recollection, or Prayer of Reſt, the Faculties operate not, and that the Soul is idle and wholly unactive. This is a manifeſt Fallacy of thoſe who have little Experience, becauſe although it operates not by Means of the Memory, nor by the ſecond Operation of the Intellect, which is the Judgment, nor by the third, which is Diſcourſe or Ratiocination, yet it operates by the firſt and chief Operation of the Intellect, which is ſimple Apprehenſion enlightened by holy Faith, and aided by the divine Gifts of the holy Spirit. And the Will is more apt to continue one Act, than to multiply many; ſo that as well the Act of the Intellect, as that of the Will, are ſo ſimple, imperceptible, and ſpiritual, that hardly the Soul knows them, and far leſs reflects upon them.

CHAP. XII.

What the Soul ought to do in internal Recollection.

THOU oughteſt to go to Prayer, that thou mayeſt deliver thyſelf wholly up into the Hands of God, with perfect Reſignation, exerting an Act of Faith, believing that thou art in the divine Preſence, afterwards ſettling in that holy Repoſe, with Quietneſs, Silence, and Tranquillity; and endeavouring for a whole Day, a whole Year, and thy whole Life, to continue that firſt Act of Contemplation, by Faith and Love.

It is not your Buſineſs to multiply theſe Acts, nor to repeat ſenſible Affections, becauſe they hinder the Purity of the ſpiritual and perfect Act of the Will, whilſt beſides that theſe ſweet Sentiments are imperfect, (conſidering the Reflection wherewith they are made, the Self-content, and external Conſolation wherewith they are ſought after, the Soul being drawn outwards to the external Faculties) there is no Neceſſity of renewing them, as the Myſtical *Falcon* hath excellently expreſſed it by the following Similitude.

" If a Jewel given to a Friend were " once put into his Hands, it is not ne- " ceſſary to repeat ſuch a Donation al- " ready made, by daily telling him (Sir, " I give you that Jewel, Sir, I give you " that Jewel) but to let him keep it, and " not take it from him, becauſe provided " he take it not, or deſign not to take it " from him, he hath ſurely given it " him."

In the ſame manner, having once dedicated, and lovingly reſigned thyſelf to the Will of God, there is nothing elſe for thee to do, but to continue the ſame, without repeating new and ſenſible Acts, provided thou takeſt not back the Jewel thou haſt once given, by committing ſome notable Fault againſt his divine Will; though thou oughteſt ſtill to exerciſe thyſelf outwardly in the external Works of thy Calling and State, for in ſo doing thou doſt the Will of God, and walkeſt in continual and virtual Oration: " He " always prays (ſaid *Theophylact*) who " does good Works; nor does he neglect " Prayer, but when he leaves off to be " juſt."

Thou oughteſt then to ſlight all thoſe Senſibilities, to the End thy Soul may be

eſtabliſhed, and acquire a Habit of internal Recollection, which is ſo effectual, that the Reſolution only of going to Prayer, awakens a lively Preſence of God, which is the Preparation to the Prayer that is about to be made; or to ſay better, is no other than a more efficacious Continuation of continual Prayer, wherein the contemplative Perſon ought to be ſettled.

By this thou wilt be undeceived, and know what is the perfect and ſpiritual Way of praying, and be adviſed what is to be done in internal Recollection: Thou wilt know that to the End Love may be perfect and pure, it is expedient to retrench the Multiplication of ſenſible and fervent Acts, the Soul continuing quiet, and reſting in that inward Silence. Becauſe Tenderneſs, Delight, and ſweet Sentiments, which the Soul experiences in the Will, are not pure Spirits, but acts blended with the Senſibility of Nature. Nor is it perfect Love, but ſenſible Pleaſure, which diſtracts and hurts the Soul.

How happy and how well applied will thy Soul be, if retreating within itſelf, it there ſhrink into its own Nothing, both in its Center and ſuperior Part, without minding

minding what it does; whether it recollect or not; whether it walk well or ill; if it operate or not, without heeding, thinking, or minding any ſenſible Thing? At that Time the Intellect believes with a pure Act, and the Will loves with perfect Love, without any kind of Impediment, imitating that pure and continued Act of Intuition and Love, which the Saints ſay the Bleſſed in Heaven have, with no other Difference, than that they ſee one another there, Face to Face; and the Soul here, through the Veil of an obſcure Faith.

O how few are the Souls that attain to this perfect Way of praying, becauſe they penetrate not enough into this internal Recollection, and Myſtical Silence, and becauſe they ſtrip not themſelves of imperfect Reflection, and ſenſible Pleaſure! O that thy Soul, without thoughtful Advertency, even of itſelf, might give itſelf in Prayer to that holy and ſpiritual Tranquillity; and ſay with *Auſtin*, *Sileat anima mea, & tranſeat ſe, non ſe cogitando!* In his Confeſſ. lib. 8. cap. 10. Let it be ſilent and do nothing, forget itſelf, and plunge into that obſcure Faith: How ſecure and ſafe would it be, though it

might ſeem to it, that thus unactive and doing nothing, it were undone.

I will ſum up this Doctrine with a Letter that the illuminated Mother of *Cantal*, wrote to a Servant of GOD: "Divine Bounty (ſaid ſhe) granted me "this Way of Prayer, that with a ſingle "View of GOD, I felt myſelf wholly de- "dicated to him, abſorpt and repoſed "in him: He ſtill continued to me that "Grace, though I oppoſed it by my In- "fidelity, giving Way to Fear, and "thinking myſelf unprofitable in that "State; for which cauſe, being willing "to do ſomething on my Part, I quite "ſpoiled all; and to this preſent I find "myſelf ſometimes aſſaulted by the ſame "Fear, though not in Prayer, but in "other Exerciſes, wherein I am always "willing to employ myſelf a little, tho' "I know very well, that in doing ſuch "Acts, I come out of my Center, and "ſee particularly that that ſimple View "of GOD, is my only Remedy and Help "ſtill, in all Troubles, Temptations, "and the Events of this Life.

"And certainly would I have followed "my internal Impulſe, I ſhould have "made uſe of no other Means in any

"Thing

" Thing whatſoever, without Exception;
" becauſe when I think to fortify my
" Soul with Arts, Reaſonings and Re-
" ſignations, then do I expoſe myſelf to
" new Temptations and Straits: Beſides
" that, I cannot do it without great Vio-
" lence: which leaves me exhauſted and
" dry, ſo that it behoves me ſpeedily to
" return to this ſimple Reſignation, know-
" ing that God, in this Manner, lets me
" ſee, that it is his Will and Pleaſure
" that a total Stop ſhould be put to the
" Operations of my Soul, becauſe he
" would have all Things done by his
" own divine Activity; and happily he
" expects no more of me, but this only
" View in all ſpiritual Exerciſes, and in
" all the Pains, Temptations, and Afflic-
" tions that may befal me in this Life.
" And the Truth is, the quieter I keep
" my Spirit by this Means, the better
" all Things ſucceed with me; and my
" Croſſes and Afflictions ſuddenly vaniſh.
" Many Times hath my bleſſed Father,
" St *Francis* of *Sales*, aſſured me of this.

" Our late Superior, encouraged me
" firmly to perſiſt in that Way, and not
" to fear any Thing in this ſimple View
" of God: She told me, that that was

" enough; and that the greater Naked-
" neſs and Quietneſs in GOD are, the
" greater Sweetneſs and Strength re-
" ceiveth the Soul, which ought to en-
" deavour to become ſo pure and ſimple,
" that it ſhould have no other Support,
" but in GOD alone.

" To this purpoſe I remember, that
" a few Days ſince, GOD communicated
" to me an Illumination, which made
" ſuch an Impreſſion upon me, as if I
" had clearly ſeen him; and this it is,
" that I ſhould never look upon myſelf,
" but walk with Eyes ſhut, leaning on
" my Beloved, without ſtriving to ſee or
" know the Way by which he guides
" me; neither fix my Thoughts on any
" Thing, nor yet beg Favours of him;
" but as undone in myſelf, reſt wholly
" and ſincerely on him."

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Declaring, how the Soul putting itſelf in the Preſence of God, with perfect Reſignation, by the pure Act of Faith, walks always in virtual and acquired Contemplation.

THOU wilt tell me (as many Souls have told me) that though by a perfect Reſignation thou haſt put thyſelf in the Preſence of God, by Means of pure Faith, as hath been already hinted, yet thou doſt not merit nor improve, becauſe thy Thoughts are ſo diſtracted, that thou cannot be fixed upon God.

Be not diſconſolate, for thou doſt not loſe Time, neither deſiſt thou from Prayer; becauſe it is not neceſſary, that during that whole Time of Recollection thou ſhouldſt actually think on God; it is enough that thou haſt been attentive in the Beginning; provided thou diſcontinue not thy Purpoſe, nor revoke the actual Attention which thou hadſt.

This Doctor *Thomas* confirms in the following Words: "That firſt Intention

" only, and thinking on GOD when one " prays, has force and value enough to " make the Prayer during all the reſt " of the Time it continues to be true, " though all that While there be no ac- " tual Contemplation on GOD." 22 Quæſt. 82. art. 13, ad. 1.

So that the Prayer ſtill continues, tho' the Imagination may ramble upon infinite Numbers of Thoughts, provided one conſent not to it, ſhift not Place, intermit not the Prayer, nor change the firſt Intention of being with GOD. And it is certain, that he changes it not, whilſt he does not leave his Place. Hence it follows, that one may perſevere in Prayer, though the Imagination be carried about with various and involuntary Thoughts. " He prays in Spirit and in Truth (ſays " *Thomas* in the forecited Place) who- " ever goes to Prayer with the Spirit and " Intention of praying, though after- " wards through Miſery and Frailty, " his Thoughts may ſtraggle." *Evagatio vero mentis quæ ſit præter propoſitum, orationis fructum non tollit.*

But thou wilt ſay, at leaſt, art thou not to remember when thou art in the Preſence of GOD, and often ſay to him, " Lord,

" Lord, abide within me; and I will " give myſelf wholly up to thee :" I anſwer, that there is no Neceſſity for that, ſeeing thou haſt a Deſign to pray, and for that End wenteſt to that Place. Faith and Intention are ſufficient, and theſe always continue; nay, the more ſimple that remembrance is, without Words, or Thoughts, the more pure, ſpiritual, internal, and worthy of God it is.

Would it not be impertinent and diſreſpectful, if being in the Preſence of a King, thou ſhouldſt every now and then ſay to him; " Sir, I believe your Ma- " jeſty is here?" It is the very ſame Thing. By the Eye of pure Faith the Soul ſees God, believes in him, and is in his Preſence; and ſo when the Soul believes, it has no need to ſay, " My God, " thou art here;" but to believe as it does believe, ſeeing in Prayer, Faith and Intention guide and conduct it to contemplate God by Means of pure Faith, and perfect Reſignation.

So that, ſo long as thou retracteſt not that Faith and Intention of being reſigned, thou walkeſt always in Faith and Reſignation, and conſequently in Prayer, and in virtual and acquired Contemplation,

tion, although thou perceive it not, remember it not, neither exerteſt new Acts and Reflections thereon.

The inward Soul being once reſolved to believe that GOD is in it, and that it will not deſire, nor act any Thing but through GOD, ought to reſt ſatisfied in that Faith and Intention in all its Works and Exerciſes, without forming or repeating new Acts of the ſame Faith, or of ſuch a Reſignation.

CHAP. XIV.

A Sequel of the ſame Matter.

THIS true Doctrine ſerves not only for the Time of Prayer; but alſo after it is over, by Night and by Day, at all Hours, and in all the daily Functions of thy Calling, thy Duty and Condition. And if thou tell me, that many Times thou forgetteſt, during a whole Day to renew thy Reſignation; I anſwer, that though it ſeem to thee, that thou art diverted from it, by attending the daily Occupations of thy Vocation, as ſtudying, reading, preaching, eating, drinking,

drinking, doing Buſineſs, and the like; thou art miſtaken; for the one deſtroys not the other, nor by ſo doing, doſt thou neglect to do the Will of God, nor to proceed in virtual Prayer.

Becauſe theſe Occupations are not contrary to his Will, nor contrary to thy Reſignation; it being certain, that God would have thee to eat, ſtudy, take Pains, do Buſineſs, &c. So that to perform theſe Exerciſes, which are conformed to his Will and Pleaſure, thou departeſt not out of his Preſence, nor from thine own Reſignation.

But if in Prayer, or out of it, thou ſhouldeſt willingly be diverted or diſtracted, ſuffering thyſelf deliberately to be tranſported into any Paſſion; then it will be good for thee to revert to God, and return into his divine Preſence, renewing the pureſt Acts of Faith and Reſignation. However it is not neceſſary to exert thoſe Acts, when thou findeſt thyſelf in Dryneſs, becauſe Dryneſs is good and holy, and cannot, how ſevere ſoever it be, take from the Soul the divine Preſence, which is eſtabliſhed in Faith. Thou oughteſt never to call Dryneſs Diſtraction, becauſe in Beginners it is want of Senſibility, and

in

in Proficients Abſtractedneſs, by Means whereof, if thou bear it out with Conſtancy, reſting quiet in thine own emptineſs, thy Soul will become more and more inward; and the Lord will work Wonders in it.

Strive then when thou comeſt from Prayer, to the End thou mayeſt return to it again, not to be diſtracted, nor diverted; but to carry thyſelf with a total Reſignation to the divine Will; that God may do with thee and all thine, according to his heavenly Pleaſure, relying on him, as on a kind and loving Father. Never recal that Intention, and though thou be taken up about the Affairs of the Condition wherein God hath placed thee, yet thou wilt ſtill be in Prayer in the Preſence of God, and in perpetual Acts of Reſignation. Therefore *Chryſoſtom* ſaid, "A juſt Man leaves not off to pray, unleſs he leaves off to be juſt. He always prays, who always does well; the good Deſire is Prayer, and if the Deſire be continued, ſo is alſo the Prayer." *Super* 5. *ad. Theſſolon.*

Thou wilt underſtand all that has been ſaid, by this clear Example: When a Man begins a Journey to *Rome*, every Step

Step he makes in the Progreſs, is voluntary; and nevertheleſs it is not neceſſary, that at every Step he ſhall expreſs his Deſire, or exert a new Act of the Will, ſaying, "I am going to *Rome*, I go to *Rome*;" becauſe, by virtue of that firſt Intention he had of travelling to *Rome*, the ſame Will ſtill remains in him; ſo he goes on without ſaying ſo, though he does not without intending ſo; you will clearly find beſides, that this Traveller, with one ſingle and explicit Act of the Will and Intention, travels, ſpeaks, hears, ſees, reaſons, eats, drinks, and does ſeveral other Things, without any Interruption to his firſt Intention, or yet of his actual journeying to *Rome*.

It is juſt ſo in the contemplative Soul: A Man having once made the Reſolution of doing the Will of God, and of being in his Preſence, he ſtill perſeveres in that Act, ſo long as he recals not the ſame, although he be taken up in hearing, ſpeaking, eating, or in any other external good Work or Function of his Calling and Quality. *Thomas Aquinas* expreſſeth all this in few Words, *Non enim oportet quod qui propter Deum aliquod iter arripuit, in qualibet parte itineris de Deo cogitet*

cogitet actu. Contra Gentiles, l. 3. c. 138. Un. 2.

Thou wilt ſay, that all Chriſtians walk in this Exerciſe, becauſe all have Faith, and may, although they be not internal, fulfil this Doctrine, eſpecially ſuch as go in the external Way of Meditation and Ratiocination. It is true, all Chriſtians have Faith, and more particularly they who meditate and conſider: But the Faith of thoſe who advance by the inward Way, is much different, becauſe it is a lively Faith, univerſal and indiſtinct, and by conſequent more practical, active, effectual and illuminated; inſomuch as the holy Ghoſt enlightens the Soul that is beſt diſpoſed, moſt; and that Soul is always beſt diſpoſed, which holds the Mind recollected; for proportionably to the Recollection the holy Ghoſt illuminates. And albeit it be true, that God communicates ſome Light in Meditation, yet it is ſo ſcanty and different from that which he communicates to the Mind, recollected in a pure and univerſal Faith, that the one to the other is no more than like two or three Drops of Water in reſpect of an Ocean: Since in Meditation two or three particular Truths are communicated

municated to the Soul; but in the internal Recollection, and the Exercise of a pure and universal Faith, the Wisdom of God is an abundant Ocean which is communicated in that obscure, simple, general and universal Knowledge.

In like Manner Resignation is more perfect in these Souls, because it springs from the internal and infused Fortitude, which grows as the internal Exercise of pure Faith, with Silence and Resignation, is continued; in the Manner that the Gifts of God's Spirit grow in contemplative Souls: For though these divine Gifts are to be found in all those that are in a State of Grace; nevertheless they are as it were dead, without Strength, and in a Manner infinitely different from those which reign in contemplative Persons, by reason of their Illustration, Vivacity and Efficacy.

From all which, be persuaded, that the inward Soul, accustomed to go daily at certain Hours to Prayer, with the Faith and Resignation I have mentioned to thee, walks continually in the Presence of God. All holy, expert and mystical Masters, teach this true and important Doctrine, because they have all had one and the same Master, who is the holy Ghost.

CHAP. XV.

A Way by which one may enter into internal Recollection, through the moſt holy Humanity of our Lord Chriſt.

THERE are two Sorts of ſpiritual Men, diametrically contrary to one another: The one ſay, that the Myſteries of the Paſſion of CHRIST, are always to be conſidered and meditated upon: The others running to the oppoſite Extreme, teach, that the Meditation of the Myſteries of the Life, Paſſion and Death of our Saviour, is not Prayer, nor yet a Remembrance of them; but the exalted Elevation to GOD, whoſe Divinity the Soul contemplates in Quiet and Silence, ought only to be called Prayer.

It is certain, that our Lord CHRIST is the Guide, the Door, and the Way; as he himſelf hath ſaid in his own Word; *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, John xiv. and before the Soul can be fit to enter into the Preſence of the Divinity, and to be united with it, it is to be waſhed with the precious Blood of a Redeemer,

deemer, and adorned with the rich Robes of his Paſſion.

Our Lord Christ, with his Doctrine and Example, is the Mirrour, the Guide of the Soul, the Way, and the only Door by which we enter into thoſe Paſtures of Life eternal, and into the vaſt Ocean of the Divinity. Hence it follows, that the Remembrance of the Paſſion and Death of our Saviour ought not wholly to be blotted out; nay, it is alſo certain, that whatſoever high Elevation of Mind the Soul may be raiſed to, it ought not in all Things to ſeparate from the moſt holy Humanity. But then it follows not from hence neither, that the Soul accuſtomed to internal Recollection, that can no longer ratiocinate, ſhould always be meditating on, and conſidering (as the other Spiritualiſts ſay) the moſt holy Myſteries of our Saviour. It is holy and good to meditate; and would to God that all Men of this World practiſed it. And the Soul beſides, with Facility, ought to be let alone in that State, and not puſhed on to another higher, ſo long as in that of Meditation it finds Nouriſhment and Profit.

It belongs to God alone, and not to the ſpiritual Guide, to promote the Soul from Meditation to Contemplation; becauſe if God, through his ſpecial Grace, call it not to this State of Prayer, the Guide can do nothing with all his Wiſdom and Inſtructions.

To take a ſecure Means then, and to avoid thoſe two ſo contrary Extremes, of not wholly blotting out the Remembrance of the Humanity; and of not having it continually before our Eyes; we ought to ſuppoſe that there are two Ways of attending the holy Humanity; that one may enter at the divine Port, which is Christ our well-being. The firſt is by conſidering the Myſteries, and meditating the Actions of the Life, Paſſion and Death of our Saviour. The ſecond by thinking on him, by the Application of the Intellect, pure Faith, or Memory.

When the Soul proceeds in perfecting and interiorizing itſelf, by Means of internal Recollection, having for ſome Time meditated on the Myſteries whereof it hath been already informed; then it retains Faith and Love to the Word Incarnate, being ready for his ſake to do whatever he inſpires into it, walking accord-

ing

ing to his Precepts; although they be not always before its Eyes. As if it ſhould be ſaid to a Son, that he ought never to forſake his Father, they intend not thereby to oblige him to have his Father always in Sight, but only to have him always in his Memory, that in Time and Place he may be ready to his Duty.

The Soul then that is entred into internal Recollection, hath no need to enter by the firſt Door of Meditation on the Myſteries, being always taken up in meditating upon them, becauſe that is not to be done without great fatigue to the Intellect, nor does it ſtand in need of ſuch Ratiocinations; ſince theſe ſerve only as a Means to attain to believing that which it hath already got the Poſſeſſion of.

The moſt noble, ſpiritual, and proper Way for Souls that are Proficients in internal Recollection, to enter by the Humanity of CHRIST our Lord, and entertain a Remembrance of him, is the ſecond Way; eying that Humanity, and the Paſſion thereof, by a ſimple Act of Faith, looking and reflecting on the ſame as the Tabernacle of the Divinity, the Beginning and End of our Salvation, JESUS CHRIST having been born, ſuffered and died a ſhameful Death for our ſakes.

This

This is the Way that makes internal Souls profit, and this holy, pious, ſwift, and inſtantaneous Remembrance of the Humanity, can be no Obſtacle to them in the Courſe of internal Recollection, unleſs if when the Soul enters into Prayer, it finds itſelf drawn back; for then it will be better to continue Recollection and mental Exerciſe. But not finding itſelf drawn back, the ſimple and ſwift Remembrance of the Humanity of the divine Word, gives no Impediment to the higheſt and moſt elevated, the moſt abſtracted and transformed Soul.

This is the Way that *Tereſa* recommends to the contemplative, rejecting the tumultuary Opinions of ſome Schoolmen. This is the ſtrait and ſafe Way, free from Dangers, which the Lord hath taught to many Souls, for attaining to Repoſe, and the holy Tranquillity of Contemplation.

Let the Soul then, when it enters into Recollection, place itſelf at the Gate of divine Mercy, which is the amiable and ſweet Remembrance of the Croſs and Paſſion of the Word that was made Man, and died for Love; let it ſtand there with Humility, reſigned to the Will of God,

in whatſoever it pleaſes the divine Majeſty to do with it; and if from that holy and ſweet Remembrance, it ſoon falls into Forgetfulneſs, there is no Neceſſity of making a new Repetition, but to continue ſilent and quiet in the Preſence of the Lord.

Wonderfully does *Paul* favour this our Doctrine in the Epiſtle which he wrote to the *Coloſſians*, wherein he exhorts them and us, that whether we eat, drink, or do any Thing elſe, we ſhould do it in the Name, and for the ſake of JESUS CHRIST. *Omne quod cunq; faritis in verbo aut in opere, omnia in nomine Jeſu Chriſti facite, gratias agentes Deo & Patri par ipſum.* GOD grant that we may all begin by JESUS CHRIST, and that in him and by him alone we may arrive at Perfection.

CHAP. XVI.

Of Internal and Myſtical Silence.

THERE are three Kinds of Silence; the firſt is of Words, the ſecond of Deſires, and the third of Thoughts. The firſt

firſt is perfect; the ſecond more perfect; and the third moſt perfect. In the firſt, that is, of Words, Virtue is acquired; in the ſecond, to wit, of Deſires, Quietneſs is attained to; in the third, of Thoughts, internal Recollection is gained. By not ſpeaking, nor deſiring, and not thinking, one arrives at the true and perfect Myſtical Silence, wherein God ſpeaks with the Soul, communicates himſelf to it, and in the Abyſs of its own depth teaches it the moſt perfect and exalted Wiſdom. He calls and guides it to this inward Solitude and Myſtical Silence, when he ſays, that he will ſpeak to it alone, in the moſt ſecret and hidden Part of the Heart. Thou art to keep thyſelf in this Myſtical Silence, if thou wouldſt hear the ſweet and divine Voice. It is not enough, for gaining this Treaſure to forſake the World, nor to renounce thine own Deſires, and all Things created; if thou wean not thyſelf from all Deſires, and all Things created; if thou wean not thyſelf from all Deſires and Thoughts. Reſt in this Myſtical Silence, and open the Door, that ſo God may communicate himſelf unto thee, unite with thee, and then form thee into himſelf.

The Perfection of the Soul conſiſts not in ſpeaking, nor in thinking much on God; but in loving him ſufficiently: This Love is attained to by Means of perfect Reſignation and internal Silence, all conſiſts in Works: The Love of God has but few Words. Thus *John* the Evangeliſt confirms and inculcates it: *My little Children, let us not love in Word, neither in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth,* Epiſt. 1. chap. iii. v. 18.

Thou art clearly convinced now, that perfect Love conſiſts not in amorous Acts, nor tender Ejaculations, nor yet in the internal Acts, wherein thou telleſt God, that thou haſt an infinite Love for him, and thou loveſt him more than thyſelf. It may be that at that Time thou ſeekeſt more thyſelf, and the Love of thyſelf, than the true Love of God, becauſe Love conſiſts in Works, and not in fair Diſcourſes.

That a rational Creature may underſtand the ſecret Deſire and Intention of thy Heart, there is a Neceſſity that thou ſhouldeſt expreſs it to him in Words. But God, who ſearches the Heart, ſtandeth not in need that thou ſhouldſt make Pro-

 feſſion,

ſeſſion, and aſſure him of it; nor does he reſt ſatisfied, as the Evangeliſt ſays, with Love in Word nor in Tongue, but with that which is true and in Deed. What avails it to tell him, with great Zeal and Fervour, that thou tenderly and perfectly loveſt him above all Things, if at one bitter Word, or ſlight Injury, thou doſt not reſign thyſelf, nor art mortified for the Love of him? A manifeſt Proof that thy Love was a Love in Tongue, and not in Deed.

Strive to be reſigned in all Things with Silence, and in ſo doing, without ſaying that thou loveſt him, thou wilt attain to the moſt perfect, quiet, and effectual and true Love. St *Peter* moſt affectionately told the Lord, that for his Sake he was ready willingly to lay down his Life; but at the Word of a young Damſel, he denied him, and there was an End of his Zeal. *Mary Magdalen* ſaid not a Word, and yet the Lord himſelf, taken with her perfect Love, became her Panegyriſt, ſaying, that ſhe had loved much. It is internally then, that with dumb Silence, the moſt perfect Virtues of Faith,

Hope,

Hope, and Charity are practiſed, without any Neceſſity of telling God, that thou loveſt him, hopeſt and believeſt in him; becauſe the Lord knows better than thou doſt, what the internal Motions of thy Heart are.

PART II.

Of ſpiritual Sufferings, whereby GOD purges Souls; of Contemplation, Infuſed and Paſſive; of perfect Reſignation, inward Humility, divine Wiſdom, true Annihilation, and internal Peace.

CHAP. I.

The Difference between the outward and inward Man.

THERE are two Sorts of ſpiritual Perſons, Internal and External: Theſe ſeek GOD without, by Diſcourſe, by Imagination and Conſideration: They endeavour mainly to get Vir-

tues,

tues, by many Abſtinences, Maceration of Body, and Mortification of the Senſes: They give themſelves to rigorous Penance; they put on Sack-cloth, chaſtiſe the Fleſh by Diſcipline, endeavour Silence, bear the Preſence of God, forming him preſent to themſelves in their Idea of him, or their Imagination, ſometimes as a Paſtor, ſometimes as a Phyſician, and ſometimes as a Father and Lord; they delight to be continually ſeeking of God, very often making fervent Acts of Love; and all this is Art and Meditation: By this Way they deſire to be great, and by the Power of voluntary and exterior Mortification, they go in queſt of ſenſible Affections and warm Sentiments, thinking that God reſides only in them, when they have them. This is the external Way, and the Way of Beginners; yet there is no arriving at Perfection by it; nay, there is not ſo much as one Step towards it, as Experience ſhews in many, that after fifty Years of this external Exerciſe, are void of God, and full of themſelves, having nothing of a ſpiritual Man, but juſt the Name of ſuch.

There are others truly ſpiritual, which have paſſed by the Beginnings of the interior Way which leads to Perfection and Union with God; and to which the Lord called them by his infinite Mercy, from that outward Way, in which before they exerciſed themſelves. Theſe Men, retired in the inward Part of their Souls, with true Reſignation into the Hands of God, with a total putting off and forgetting even of themſelves, do always go with a raiſed Spirit to the Preſence of the Lord, by the Means of pure Faith, without Image, Form or Figure, but with great Aſſurance founded in Tranquillity and Reſt internal: In whoſe infuſed Meeting and Entertainment the Spirit draws with ſo much Force, that it makes the Soul contract inwardly, the Heart, the Body, and all the Powers of it.

The Soul, as they are already paſſed by the interior Mortification, and have been cleanſed by God with the Fire of Tribulation, ordained by his Hand, and after his Way, are Maſters of themſelves, becauſe they are intirely ſubdued and denied, which makes them live with great Repoſe and internal Peace: And although in many Occaſions they feel Reſiſtance

ſiſtance and Temptations, yet they become preſently victorious, becauſe being already Souls of Proof, and endued with divine Strength, the Motions of Paſſions cannot laſt long upon them; and altho' vehement Temptations and troubleſome Suggeſtions of the Enemy may perſevere a long Time about them, they are all conquered with infinite Gain; God being he that fights within them.

Theſe Souls have already attained a greater Light, and a true Knowledge of Christ our Lord, both of his Divinity and his Humanity: They exerciſe this infuſed Knowledge with a quiet Silence in the inward Entertainment, and the ſuperior Part of their Souls, with a Spirit free from Images and external Recollections, with a Love that is pure and ſtripped of all Creatures; they are raiſed alſo from outward Actions, to the Love of Humanity and Divinity; ſo much as they enjoy, they forget, and in all of it they find that they love their God with all their Heart and Spirit.

Theſe bleſſed and ſublimated Souls take no Pleaſure in any Thing of the World, but in Contempt, and in being alone, and in being forſaken and for-

gotten by every Body: They live ſo diſintereſted and taken off, that though they continually receive many ſupernatural Graces, yet they are not changed, no not at thoſe Inclinations; being juſt as if they had not received them, keeping always in the inmoſt of their Hearts a great Lowlineſs and Contempt of themſelves; always humbled in the Depth of their own Unworthineſs and Vileneſs: In the ſame Manner they are always quiet, ſerene, and poſſeſſed with Evenneſs of Mind in Graces and Favours extraordinary, as alſo in the moſt rigorous and bitter Sufferings. There is no News that frights them; no Succeſs that makes them glad; Tribulations never diſturb them; nor the interior, continual, and divine Communications make them vain and conceited; they remain always full of holy and filial Fear, in a wonderful Peace, Conſtancy and Serenity.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Purſues the ſame.

IN the external Way, they take care to do continual Acts of all the Virtues one after another, to get to the Attainment of them: They pretend to purge Imperfections with Induſtries, proportionable to Deſtruction; they take Care to root up Intereſts one after another, with a different and contrary Exerciſe: But though they endeavour never ſo much, they arrive at nothing; becauſe we cannot do any Thing which is not Imperfection and Miſery.

But in the inward Way, and loving Entertainment in the Preſence Divine, as the Lord is he that works, Virtue is eſtabliſhed, Intereſts are rooted up, Imperfections are deſtroyed, and Paſſions removed; which makes the Soul free unexpectedly, and taken off, when Occaſions are repreſented, without ſo much as thinking of the Good which God of his infinite Mercy prepared for them.

It muſt be known that theſe Souls, though thus perfect, as they have the true

Light of God, yet by it they know profoundly their own Miſeries, Weakneſſes, and Imperfections, and what they yet want to arrive at Perfection, towards which they are walking; they are afflicted, and abhor themſelves; they exerciſe themſelves in a loving Fear of God, and Contempt of themſelves, but with a true Hope in God, and Diſconfidence in themſelves. The more they are humble, with true Contempt and Knowledge of themſelves, the more they pleaſe God, and arrive at a ſingular Reſpect and Veneration in in his Preſence. Of all the good Works that they do, and of all that they continually ſuffer, as well within as without, they make no Manner of Account before that divine Preſence.

Their continual Exerciſe is, to enter into themſelves, in God, with Quiet and Silence, becauſe there is his Center, Habitation and Delight. They make a greater Account of this interior Retirement, than of ſpeaking of God; they retire into that interior and ſecret Center of the Soul, to know God, and receive his divine Influence with Fear and loving Reverence; if they go out, they go out only to know and deſpiſe themſelves.

But

But know, that few are the Souls which arrive at this happy State; becauſe few there are that are willing to embrace Contempt, and ſuffer themſelves to be refined and purified; upon which Account, although they are many that enter into this interior Way, yet it is a rare Thing for a Soul to go on, and not ſtick upon the Entrance. The Lord ſaid to a Soul, "This inward Way is trod by "few; it is ſo high a Grace that none "deſerves it: few walk in it, becauſe it "is no other than a Death of the Sen-"ſes; and few there be that are will-"ing ſo to die and be annihilated; in "which Diſpoſition this ſo ſovereign a "Gift is founded."

Herewith thou wilt undeceive thyſelf, and perfectly know the great Difference which there is between the external and internal Way, and how different that Preſence of God is, which ariſes from Meditation, from that which is infuſed and ſupernatural, ariſing from the interior and infuſed Entertainment, and from paſſive Contemplation; and laſtly, you will know the great Difference which is between the outward and inward Man.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The Means of obtaining Peace internal, is not the Delight of Senſe; not ſpiritual Conſolation, but the denying of Self-love.

IT is the ſaying of *Bernard*, that to ſerve GOD is nothing elſe but to do Good and ſuffer Evil. He that would go to Perfection by the Means of Sweetneſs and Conſolation, is miſtaken: You muſt deſire no other Conſolation from GOD, than to end your Life for his ſake, in the State of true Obedience and Subjection. CHRIST our Lord's Way, was not that of Sweetneſs and Softneſs, nor did he invite us to any ſuch, either by his Words or Example, when he ſaid, ——*He that will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and let him take up his Croſs and follow me*, St Matt. xxiv. 26. The Soul that would be united to CHRIST, muſt be conformable to him, and follow him in the Way of Suffering.

Thou wilt ſcarce begin to reliſh the Sweetneſs of divine Love in Prayer, but the

the Enemy with his deceitful Craftineſs will be kindling in thy Heart Deſires of the Deſert and Solitude, that thou mayeſt without any body's hindrance ſpread the Sails to continual and delightful Prayers. Open thine Eyes, and conſider that this Counſel and Deſire is not conformable to the true Counſel of CHRIST our Lord, who has not invited us to follow the Sweetneſs and Comfort of our own Will, but the denying ourſelves, ſaying, *Abneget ſemet ipſum:* As if he ſhould ſay, "He that will follow me, and come unto Perfection, let him part with his own Will wholly, and leaving all Things, let him entirely ſubmit to the Yoke of Obedience and Subjection, by Means of Self-denial, which is the trueſt Croſs."

There are many Souls dedicated to GOD, which receive from his Hand great Thoughts, Viſions, and mental Elevations; and yet for all that, the Lord keeps from them the Grace of working Miracles, underſtanding hidden Secrets, foretelling future Contingencies; as he communicates theſe Things to other Souls which have conſtantly gone through Tribulations, Temptations, and the true Croſs,

Croſs, in the State of perfect Humility, Obedience and Subjection.

O what a great Happineſs is it for a Soul to be ſubdued and ſubject! What great Riches is it to be Poor! What a mighty Honour to be deſpiſed! What a Height is it to be beaten down! What a Comfort is it to be afflicted! What a Credit of Knowledge is it to be reputed ignorant! and finally, What a Happineſs of Happineſſes is it to be crucified with CHRIST! This is that Lot which the Apoſtle gloried in; *Nos autem gloriari oportet in cruce Domini noſtri Jeſu Chriſti*, Gal. vi. 14. Let others boaſt in their Riches, Dignities, Delights and Honours; but to us there is no higher Honour, than to be denied, deſpiſed and crucified with CHRIST.

But what a Grief is this, that ſcarce is there one Soul which prizes ſpiritual Pleaſures, and is willing to be denied for CHRIST, embracing his Croſs with Love. *Multi ſunt vocati; pauci vero electi*, (Matt. xxii.) ſays the holy Ghoſt: "Many are they who are called to Perfection, but few are they that arrive at it;" becauſe they are few who embrace the Croſs with

with Patience, Conſtancy, Peace and Reſignation.

To deny one's ſelf in all Things, to be ſubject to another's Judgment, to mortify continually all inward Paſſions; to annihilate one's ſelf in all Reſpects, to follow always that which is contrary to one's own Will, Appetite and Judgment, are Things that few can do: Many are are thoſe that teach them, but few are they that practice them.

Many Souls have undertaken, and daily do undertake this Way; and they perſevere all the while they keep the ſweet Reliſh of their primitive Fervour; but this Sweetneſs and ſenſible Delight is ſcarce done, but preſently, upon the overtaking of a Storm of Trouble, Temptation, and Dryneſs (which are neceſſary Things to help a Man up the high Mountain of Perfection) they faulter and turn back: A clear Sign that they ſought themſelves, and not God or Perfection.

May it pleaſe God, that the Souls which have had Light, and been called to an inward Peace, and by not being conſtant in Dryneſs, and Tribulation, and Temptation, have ſtarted back, may not be

be caſt into outer Darkneſs, with him that had not on a Wedding Garment; although he was a Servant, for not being diſpoſed, giving himſelf up to Self-love.

This Monſter muſt be vanquiſhed, this ſeven-headed Beaſt of Self-love muſt be beheaded, in order to get up to the Top of the high Mountain of Peace. This Monſter puts his Head every where; ſometimes it gets amongſt Relations, which ſtrangely hinder with their Converſations; to which Nature eaſily lets itſelf be led; ſometimes it gets, with a good look of Gratitude, into paſſionate Affection; ſometimes into Affection to moſt ſubtle ſpiritual vain Glories and temporal ones, and Niceties of Honour; which Things ſtick very cloſe; ſometimes it cleaves to ſpiritual Pleaſures, ſtaying even in the Gifts of GOD, and in his Graces freely beſtowed; ſometimes it deſires exceedingly the Preſervation of Health, and with Diſguiſe, to be uſed well, and its own Profit and Conveniencies; ſometimes it would ſeem well, with very curious Subtilties; and laſtly, it cleaves with a notable Propenſity, to its own proper Judgment and Opinion in all Things; the Roots of which are cloſely

cloſely fixed in its own Will: All theſe are Effects of Self-love, and if they be not denied, impoſſible it is that a Man ſhould ever get up to the Height of perfect Contemplation, to the higheſt Happineſs of the loving Union, and the lofty Throne of Peace internal.

CHAP. IV.

Of two ſpiritual Afflictions, wherewith God cleanſeth the Soul that he unites with Himſelf.

NOW you ſhall know that God uſes two Ways for the cleanſing the Souls which he would perfect and enlighten, to unite them cloſely to himſelf: The firſt (of which we will treat in this and the following Chapter) is with the bitter Waters of Afflictions, Anguiſh, Diſtreſs, and inward Torments. The ſecond is, with the burning Fire of an inflamed Love, a Love impatient and hungry: Sometimes he makes uſe of both, in thoſe Souls which he would fill with Perfection;

Perfection; ſometimes he puts them into the ſtrong keeping of Tribulations, and inward and outward Bitterneſs, ſcorching them with the Fire of rigorous Temptation; ſometimes he puts them into the Crucible of anxious and diſtruſtful Love, making them faſt there with a mighty Force; becauſe ſo much the greater as the Lord would have the Illumination and Union of a Soul to be, ſo much the more ſtrong is the Torment and the Purgation; becauſe all the Knowledge and Union with GOD ariſes from ſuffering, which is the trueſt Proof of Love.

O that thou wouldſt underſtand the great Good of Tribulation! This is that which blots out Sins, cleanſes the Soul, and produces Patience; this in Prayer inflames it, enlarges it, and puts it upon the Exerciſe of the moſt ſublime Act of Charity: This rejoices the Soul, brings it near to GOD, calls it to, and gives it Entrance into Heaven: The ſame is that which tries the true Servants of GOD, and renders them ſweet, valiant, and conſtant; that is it which makes GOD hear them with ſpeed. *Ad Dominum, cum tribularer, clamavi & exaudivit me*, Pſal. cxix. It is that which annihilates, refines, and

perfects

perfects them; and finally, this is that which of earthly, makes Souls heavenly; of human, divine; transforming them and uniting them in an admirable Manner, with the Lord's Humanity and Divinity. It was well ſaid by *Auguſtine*, That the Life of the Soul upon Earth, is Temptation. Bleſſed is the Soul which is always oppoſed, if it doth conſtantly reſiſt Temptation. This is the Means which the Lord makes uſe of to humble it, to annihilate it, to ſpend it, to mortify it, to deny it, to perfect it, and fill it with his divine Gifts: By this Means of Tribulation and Temptation he comes to crown it, and transform it. Perſuade thyſelf that Temptations and Fightings are neceſſary for the Soul, to make it perfect.

O bleſſed Soul, if thou knoweſt how to be content and quiet in the Fire of Tribulation, and wouldſt but let thyſelf be waſhed with the bitter Waters of Affliction, how quickly wouldſt thou find thyſelf rich in heavenly Gifts? How ſoon would the divine Bounty make a rich Throne in thy Soul, and a goodly Habitation for thee to refreſh and ſolace thyſelf in it?

Know

Know that the Lord hath his Repoſe no where but in quiet Souls, and in thoſe in which the Fire of Tribulation and Temptation hath burnt up the Dregs of Paſſions, and the bitter Water of Afflictions hath waſhed off the filthy Spots of inordinate Appetites; in a Word, the Lord repoſes not himſelf any where, but where Quietneſs reigns, and Self-love is baniſhed.

But thou wilt never arrive at this happy State, nor find in thy Soul the precious Pledge of Peace internal, although thou haſt gotten the better of the external Senſes by the Grace of GOD, till it become purified from the diſordered Paſſions of Concupiſence, Self-eſteem, Deſire and Thoughts, how ſpiritual ſoever, and many other Intereſts and ſecret Vices, which lie within the very Soul of thee, miſerably hindring the peaceable Entrance of that great Lord into it, who would be united and transformed with thee.

The very Virtues acquired, and not purified, are a Hindrance to this great Gift of the Peace of the Soul; and more, the Soul is clogged by an inordinate Deſire of ſublime Gifts, by the Appetite of feeling

feeling ſpiritual Conſolation, by ſticking to infuſed and divine Graces, entertaining itſelf in them, and deſiring more of them, to enjoy them, and finally, by a Deſire of being great.

O how much is there to be purified in a Soul that muſt arrive at the holy Mountain of Perfection, and of Transformation with God! O how diſpoſed, naked, denied, annihilated, ought the Soul to be, which would not hinder the Entrance of this divine Lord into it, nor his continual Communication!

This Diſpoſition of preparing the Soul in its Bottom for divine Entrance, muſt of Neceſſity be made by the divine Wiſdom. If a Seraphim is not ſufficient to purify the Soul, how ſhall a Soul that is frail, miſerable, and without Experience, ever be able to purify itſelf?

Therefore the Lord himſelf will diſpoſe thee, and prepare thee paſſively by a Way thou underſtandeſt not, with the Fire of Tribulation and inward Torment, without any other Diſpoſition on thy Side, than a Conſent to the internal and external Croſs.

Thou wilt find within thyſelf a paſſive Dryneſs, Darkneſs, Anguiſh, Contradictions,

tions, continual Reſiſtance, inward Deſertions, horrible Deſolations, continual and ſtrong Suggeſtions, and vehement Temptations of the Enemy; finally, thou wilt ſee thyſelf ſo afflicted, that thou wilt not be able to lift up thy Heart, being full of Sorrow and Heavineſs, nor do the leaſt Act of Faith, Hope, or Charity.

Here thou wilt ſee thyſelf forlorn, and ſubject to Paſſions of Impatience, Anger, Rage, and diſordered Appetites, ſeeming to thyſelf the moſt miſerable Creature, the greateſt Sinner in the World, the moſt abhorred of GOD, deprived and and ſtript of all Virtue, with a Pain like that of Hell, ſeeing thyſelf afflicted and deſolate, to think that thou haſt altogether loſt GOD; this will be thy cruel Cutting and moſt bitter Torment.

But though thou ſhalt ſee thyſelf ſo oppreſſed, ſeeming to thyſelf to be proud, impatient and wrathful; yet theſe Temptations ſhall loſe their Force and Power upon thee; they have no Place in thy Soul, by ſecret Virtue, the ſovereign Gift of inward Strength, which rules in the inmoſt Part of it, conquering the moſt affrightening Puniſhment and Pain, and the ſtrongeſt Temptation.

Keep

Keep conſtant, O bleſſed Soul, keep conſtant; for it will not be as thou imagineſt, nor art thou at any Time nearer to God, than in ſuch Caſes of Deſertion; for although the Sun is hid in the Clouds, yet it changes not its Place, nor a Jot the more loſes its Brightneſs. The Lord permits this painful Deſertion in thy Soul, to purge and poliſh thee, to cleanſe and diſrobe thee of thyſelf; and thou mayeſt in this Manner be all his, and give thyſelf wholly up to him, as his infinite Bounty is intirely given to thee, that thou mayeſt be his Delight; for although thou doſt grone and lament, and weep, yet he is joyful and glad in the moſt ſecret and hidden Place of thy Soul.

CHAP. V.

How important and neceſſary it is to the interior Soul, to ſuffer blindfold this firſt and ſpiritual Tribulation.

TO the End that the Soul, of earthly may become heavenly, and may come to that greateſt Good of Union with God,

God, it is neceſſary for it to be purified in the Fire of Tribulation and Temptation: And though it be true, and a known and approved Maxim, that all thoſe that ſerve the Lord, muſt ſuffer Troubles, Perſecutions and Tribulations; yet the happy Souls which are guided by God, by the ſecret Way of the interior Walk, and of purgative Contemplation, muſt ſuffer above all ſtrong and horrible Temptations and Torments, more bitter than thoſe wherewith the Martyrs were crowned in the primitive Church.

The Martyrs, beſides the Shortneſs of their Torment, which hardly endured Days, were comforted with a clear Light and ſpecial Help, in Hope of the near and ſure Reward. But the deſolate Soul that muſt die in itſelf, and put off, and make clean its Heart, ſeeing itſelf abandoned by God, ſurrounded by Temptations, Darkneſs, Anguiſh, Affliction, Sorrow and rigid Drowths, doth taſte of Death every Moment in its painful Temptations and tremendous Deſolation, without feeling the leaſt Comfort, with an Affliction ſo great, that the Pain of it ſeems nothing elſe but a Death prolonged, and a continual Suffering: where-

upon

upon with great Reaſon, it may be ſaid, That although there be many Sufferers, yet there are few Souls which follow CHRIST our Lord with Peace and Reſignation in ſuch Torments.

Then it was Men that martyred them, and GOD comforted their Souls; but now it is GOD that afflicts and hides himſelf, and the Devils, like cruel Executioners, have a thouſand Ways to torment the Soul and Body, the whole Man being crucified within and without.

Thy Sorrow will ſeem to thee inſuperable, and thy Afflictions paſt the Power of Comfort, and that Heaven rains no more upon thee; thou wilt ſee thyſelf begirt with Griefs, and beſieged with Sorrows internal, from the Darkneſs of thy Powers, from the Weakneſs of Diſcourſes: Strong Temptations will afflict thee, painful Diſtruſts and troubleſome Scruples; nay, Light and Judgment will forſake thee.

All the Creatures will give thee Trouble; ſpiritual Counſels will bring thee Pain; the reading of Books, how holy ſoever, will not comfort thee, as it uſed to do: If they ſpeak to thee of Patience, they will exceedingly trouble thee; the

fear of losing God through thy Unthankfulness and Want of Returns, will torment thee to the Soul; if thou groneſt and beggeſt Help of God, thou wilt find inſtead of Comfort, inward Reproof and Disfavour; like another *Canaanitiſh* Woman, to whom he made no Anſwer at firſt, and then treated her as the Creature he was ſpeaking of.

And although at this Time the Lord will not abandon thee, becauſe it would be impoſſible to live one Moment without his Help, yet the Succour will be ſo ſecret, that thy Soul will not know it, nor be capable of Hope and Conſolation; nay, it will ſeem to be without Remedy, ſuffering like condemned Perſons, the Pains of Hell, (*Circumdederunt me Dolores mortis, & Pericula inferni invenerunt me*, Pſalm 114.) and it would change them as ſuch, with a violent Death, which would be a great Comfort; but (like thoſe) the End of thoſe Afflictions and Bitterneſſes will ſeem impoſſible.

But if thou, O bleſſed Soul, ſhouldeſt know how much thou art beloved, and defended by that divine Lord, in the midſt of thy long Torments, thou wouldeſt find them ſo ſweet, that it would be ne-

ceſſar

ceſſary that God ſhould work a Miracle to let thee live. Be conſtant, O happy Soul, be conſtant and of good Courage; for however intolerable thou art to thyſelf, yet thou wilt be protected, enriched, and beloved by that greateſt Good, as if he had nothing elſe to do than to lead thee to Perfection by the higheſt Steps of Love; and if thou doſt not turn away, but perſevereſt conſtantly, without leaving off thy Undertaking, know that thou offereſt to God the moſt acceptable Sacrifice; ſo that if the Lord were capable of Pain, he would find no Eaſe till he has completed this loving Union with thy Soul.

If from the Chaos of nothing, his Omnipotence has produced ſo many Wonders, what will he do in thy Soul, created after his own Image and Likeneſs, if thou keepeſt conſtant, quiet and reſigned, with a true Knowledge of thy Nothingneſs? Happy Soul, which even when it is diſturbed, afflicted and diſconſolate, keeps ſteady there within, without going forth to deſire exterior Comfort.

Afflict not thyſelf too much, and with Inquietude, becauſe theſe ſharp Martyrdoms may continue; perſevere in Humility,

mility, and go not out of thyſelf to ſeek Aid; for all thy Good conſiſts in being ſilent, ſuffering, and holding Patience with Reſt and Reſignation: There wilt thou find the divine Strength to overcome ſo hard a Warfare: He is within thee that fighteth for thee; and he is Strength itſelf.

When thou ſhalt come to this painful State of fearful Deſolation, Weeping and Lamentation are not forbidden thy Soul, whilſt in the upper Part of it, it keeps reſigned. Who can bear the Lord's heavy Hand without Tears and Lamentation? That great Champion *Job*, even he lamented; ſo did CHRIST our Lord in his Forſaking: But their Weepings were accompanied with Reſignation.

Afflict not thyſelf, though GOD do crucify thee and make Trial of thy Fidelity; imitate the Woman of *Canaan*, who being rejected and injured, did importune and perſevere, humbling herſelf and following him, though ſhe were treated as ſhe was. It is neceſſary to drink the Cup, and not go back: If the Scales were taken from thine Eyes, as they were from *Paul*'s, thou wouldeſt ſee the Neceſſity of Suffering, and Glory

as

as he did, eſteeming more the being crucified, than being an Apoſtle.

Thy Advantage conſiſts not in enjoying, but in ſuffering with Quiet and Reſignation. *Tereſa* is ſaid to have appeared after her Death to a certain Soul, and told it, "That ſhe had only been rewarded for "her Pain; but had not received one "Dram of Reward for ſo many Extaſies, and Revelations and Comforts, "that ſhe had enjoyed in this World."

Although this painful Deſolation and paſſive Purgation be ſo tremendous, that with Reaſon it hath gotten the Name of Hell among Myſtic Divines, (becauſe it ſeems impoſſible to be able to live a Moment with ſo grievous a Torment; ſo that with great Reaſon it may be ſaid, "That he that ſuffers it, lives dying, "and dying lives a lingring Death;") yet know, that it is neceſſary to endure it, to arrive at the ſweet, joyous, and abundant Riches of high Contemplation and loving Union: And there has been no holy Soul, which has not paſſed through this ſpiritual and painful Torment.

CHAP. VI.

THE other more profitable and meritorious Tribulation, in Souls already advanced in Perfection and deep Contemplation, is a Fire of divine Love, which burns the Soul, and makes it painful with the ſame Love: Sometimes the Abſence of its Beloved afflicts it.

Juſt ſo much as Light and Love increaſes, juſt ſo much increaſes the Grief in ſeeing that Good abſent, which it loves ſo well. To feel it near itſelf is Enjoyment; and never to have done knowing and poſſeſſing it, conſumes its Life: It has Food and Drink near its Mouth, whilſt it wants either, and cannot be ſatisfied. It ſees itſelf ſwallowed up and drowned in a Sea of Love, whilſt the powerful Hand that is able to ſave it, is near it; and yet doth not do it; nor doth it know when he will come, whom it ſo much does deſire.

Sometimes it hears the inward Voice of its Beloved, which courts and calls it; and a ſoft and delicate Whiſper, which goes forth from the Secret of the Soul where

where it abides, which pierces it ſtrongly, even like to melt and diſſolve it, in ſeeing how near it hath him within itſelf, and yet how far off from it, whilſt it cannot come to poſſeſs him.

CHAP. VII.

Inward Mortification and perfect Reſignation are neceſſary for obtaining internal Peace.

THE moſt ſubtle Arrow that is ſhot at us from Nature, is to induce us to that which is unlawful, with a Pretence that it may be neceſſary and uſeful. O how many Souls have ſuffered themſelves to be led away, and have loſt the Spirit by this gilded Cheat. Thou wilt never taſte the delicious Manna, (*Quod nemo novit, niſi qui accipit*, Apoc. ch. 2.) unleſs thou doſt perfectly overcome thyſelf, even to die in thyſelf; becauſe he who endeavours not die to his Paſſions, is not well diſpoſed to receive the Gift of Underſtanding,

without the Infusion whereof it is impossible for him to go in into himself, and be changed in his Spirit; and therefore those that keep without have nothing of it.

Never disquiet thyself for any Accident: For Inquietude is the Door by which the Enemy gets into the Soul to rob it of its Peace.

Resign and deny thyself wholly; for though true Self-denial is harsh at the Beginning, it is easy in the middle, and becomes most sweet in the End.

Thou wilt find thyself far from Perfection, if thou dost not find GOD in every Thing.

Know, that pure, perfect and essential Love, consists in the Cross, in Self-denial and Resignation, in perfect Humility, in Poverty of Spirit, and in a mean Opinion of thyself.

In the Time of strong Temptation, Desertion and Desolation, it is necessary for thee to get close into thy Center, that thou mayest only look at, and contemplate GOD, who keeps his Throne and his Abode in the Bottom of thy Soul.

Thou

Thou wilt find Impatience and Bitterneſs of Heart to grow from the Depth of ſenſible, emptied, and mortified Love.

True Love is known, with its Effects, when the Soul is profoundly humbled, and deſires to be truly mortified and diſpoſed.

Many there be, who, however they have been dedicated to Prayer, yet have no Reliſh of GOD; becauſe in the End of their Prayers, they are neither mortified, nor attend upon GOD any longer: For obtaining that peaceable and continual attending, it is neceſſary to get a great Purity of Mind and Heart, great Peace of Soul, and an univerſal Reſignation.

To the ſimple and the mortified, the Recreation of the Senſes is a Sort of Death: They never go to it, unleſs compelled by Neceſſity and Edification of their Neighbours.

The Bottom of our Soul, you will know, is the Place of our Happineſs. There the Lord ſhews us Wonders: There we ingulf and loſe ourſelves in the immenſe Ocean of his infinite Goodneſs, in which we keep fixed and unmoveable. There reſides the incompa-

rable Fruition of our Soul, and that eminent and ſweet Reſt of it. An humble and reſigned Soul, which is come to this Bottom, ſeeks no more than merely to pleaſe God, and the holy and loving Spirit teaches it every Thing with his ſweet and enlivening Unction.

Amongſt the Saints there are ſome who continually ſuffer, with Patience, Indiſpoſitions of Body, of which God takes great Care: But high and ſovereign is their Gift, who by the Strength of the holy Ghoſt, ſuffer both internal and external Croſſes with Content and Reſignation. This is that Sort of Holineſs ſo much the more rare, as it is more precious in the Sight of God. The ſpiritual ones which walk this Way, are rare: Becauſe they are few in the World, who do totally deny themſelves, to follow Christ crucified, with Simpleneſs and Barrenneſs of Spirit, through the loneſome and thorny Ways of the Croſs, without making Reflections upon themſelves.

A Life of Self-denial is above all the Miracles of the Saints; and it doth not know whether it be alive or dead, loſt or gained, whether it agrees or reſiſts:

This

This is the true reſigned Life. But although it ſhould be a long Time before thou comeſt to this State, and thou ſhouldſt think not to have made one Step towards it, yet affright not thyſelf at this, for GOD uſes to beſtow upon a Soul that Bleſſing in one Moment, which was denied it for many Years before.

He that deſires to ſuffer Blindfold, without the Comfort of GOD or the Creatures, is gotten too far onwards to be able to reſiſt unjuſt Accuſations which his Enemies make againſt him, even in the moſt dreadful and interior Deſolation.

The ſpiritual Man, that lives by GOD and in him, is inwardly contented in the midſt of his Adverſities, becauſe the Croſs and Affliction are his Life and Delight.

Tribulation is a great Treaſure, wherewith GOD honours thoſe that be his, in this Life: Therefore evil Men become in ſome Sort, though not intentionally, ſerviceable to thoſe that are Good; and ſo are the Devils themſelves, which by afflicting us, do try to ruin us; but inſtead of doing us Harm, they do us the greateſt Good imaginable.

There muſt be Tribulation to make a Man's Life acceptable unto GOD; without

out it, it is like the Body without the Soul, the Soul without Grace, the Earth without the Sun.

With the Wind of Tribulation God ſeparates, in the Floor of the Soul, the Chaff from the Corn.

When God crucifies in the inmoſt Part of the Soul, no Creature is able to comfort it; nay, Comforts are but grievous and bitter Croſſes to it. And if it be well inſtructed in the Laws and Diſcipline of the Ways of pure Love, in the Time of great Deſolation and inward Troubles, it ought not to ſeek abroad among the Creatures for Comfort, nor lament itſelf with them, nor will it be able to read ſpiritual Books, becauſe this is a ſecret Way of getting at a Diſtance from Suffering.

Thoſe are to be pitied, who cannot find in their Hearts to believe that Tribulation and Suffering is their greateſt Bleſſing. They who are perfect ought always to be deſirous of dying and ſuffering, being always in a State of Death and Suffering: Vain is the Man who doth not ſuffer, becauſe he is born to toil and ſuffer; but much more the Friends and Elect of God.

Undeceive

Undeceive thyſelf, and believe, that in order to thy Soul's being totally transformed with GOD, it is neceſſary for it to be loſt, and be denied in its Life, Senſe, Knowledge and Power; and to die living, and not living; dying, and not dying; ſuffering, and not ſuffering; reſigning up, and not reſigning up itſelf; without reflecting upon any Thing.

Perfection, in its Followers, receives not its Glories, but by Fire, Griefs, Torments, Puniſhment and Contempt, ſuffered and endured with Gallantry and Courage; and he that would have ſome Place to ſet his Feet on, and reſt himſelf, and does not go beyond the Reaſon of Reaſon and of Senſe, will never get into the ſecret Cabinet of Knowledge, though by reading he may chance to get a Taſte, and reliſh the Underſtanding of it.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Purſues the ſame Matter.

THOU muſt know, that the Lord will not manifeſt himſelf in thy Soul, till it be denied in itſelf, and dead in its Senſes and Powers: Nor will it ever come to this State, till being perfectly reſigned, it reſolves to be with GOD all alone; making an equal Account of Gifts and Contempts, Light and Darkneſs, Peace and War. In ſum, that the Soul may arrive at perfect Quietneſs, and ſupreme and internal Peace, it ought firſt to die in itſelf, and live only in GOD, and for him; and the more dead it ſhall be in itſelf, the more ſhall it know GOD: But if it doth not mind this continual denying of itſelf, and internal Mortification, it will never arrive at this State, nor preſerve GOD within it; and then it will be continually ſubject to Accidents and Paſſions of the Mind, ſuch as are judging, murmuring, reſenting, excuſing, defending, to keep its Honour and Reputation, which are Enemies to Perfection, Peace, and the Spirit.

Know

Know that the Diverſities of States amongſt thoſe that be ſpiritual, conſiſts only, in not dying all alike; but in the happy, which die continually, God hath his Honour, his Bleſſings and Delights here below.

Great is the Difference which is between doing, ſuffering, and dying; doing is delightful, and belongs to Beginners; ſuffering, with Deſire, belongs to thoſe who are Proficients; dying always in themſelves, belongs to thoſe who are accompliſhed and perfect; of which Number there are very few in the World.

How happy wilt thou be, if thou haſt no other Thought, but to die in thyſelf? Thou wilt then become not only victorious over thine Enemies, but over thyſelf: In which Victory, thou wilt certainly find pure Love, perfect Peace, and divine Wiſdom.

It is impoſſible for a Man to be able to think and live Myſtically in a ſimple Underſtanding of the divine and infuſed Wiſdom, if he does not firſt die in himſelf by the total denying of Senſe, and the reaſonable Appetite.

The true Leſſon of the ſpiritual Man, and that which thou oughteſt to learn, is,

to

to leave all Things in their Place, and not meddle with any, but what thy Office may bind thee to: Becauſe the Soul which leaves every Thing to find God, doth then begin to have all in the Eternity it ſeeks.

Some Souls there are, who ſeek Repoſe; others, without ſeeking, have the Pleaſure of it; others have a Pleaſure in Pain, and others ſeek it. The firſt do as good as nothing, the ſecond are in a Way towards it, the third run, and the laſt flee.

The diſeſteem of Delights, and the counting of them Torment, is the Property of a truly mortified Man.

Enjoyment and internal Peace are the Fruits of the Spirit divine; and no Man gets them into his Poſſeſſion, if in the Cloſet of his Soul he is not a reſigned Man.

Thou ſeeſt that the Diſpleaſures of the Good, paſs preſently away; but for all that endeavour never to have them, nor to ſtop in them; for they damnify thy Health, diſturb thy Reaſon, and diſquiet thy Spirit.

Amongſt other holy Counſels which thou muſt obſerve, remember well this that follows: Look not upon other Mens Faults,

Faults, but thine own: Keep Silence with a continual internal Converſation: Mortify thyſelf in all Things, and at all Hours, and by this Means thou wilt get free from many Imperfections, and make thyſelf Commander of great Virtues.

Mortify thyſelf in not judging ill of any Body at any Time; becauſe the Suſpicion of thy Neighbours diſturbs the Purity of Heart, diſcompoſes it, brings the Soul out, and takes away its Repoſe.

Never wilt thou have perfect Reſignation, if thou mindeſt human Reſpects, and reflecteſt upon the little Idol of what People ſay. The Soul that goes by the inward Way, will ſoon loſe itſelf, if once it come to look at Reaſon amongſt the Creatures, and in Commerce and Converſation with them. There is no other Reaſon, than not to look at Reaſon, but to imagine that God permits Grievances to fall on us, to humble and annihilate us, and make us live wholly reſigned.

Behold how God makes greater Account of a Soul that lives internally reſigned, than of another that doth Miracles, even to the raiſing of the Dead.

Many Souls there are, which, though they exerciſe Prayer, yet becauſe they

are

are not mortified, are always imperfect, and full of Self-love.

Hold it for a true Maxim, That Nobody can do a Grievance or Injury to a Soul deſpiſed by itſelf, and one that is nothing in its own Account.

Finally, Be of Hope, ſuffer, be ſilent and patient: Let nothing affright thee; all of it will have a Time to End; God only is he that is unchangeable; Patience brings a Man in every Thing. He that hath God, hath all Things; and he that hath him not, hath nothing.

CHAP. IX.

For the obtaining of internal Peace, it is neceſſary for the Soul to know his Miſery.

IF the Soul ſhould not fall into ſome Faults, it would never come to underſtand its own Miſery, though it hears Men ſpeak, and reads ſpiritual Books; nor can it ever obtain precious Peace, if it do not firſt know its own miſerable Weakneſs; becauſe there the Remedy is difficult,

difficult, where there is no clear Knowledge of the Defect. God will ſuffer in thee ſometimes one Fault, ſometimes another, that by this Knowledge of thyſelf, ſeeing thee ſo often fallen, thou mayeſt believe that thou art a mere nothing; in which Knowledge and Belief, true Peace and perfect Humility is founded: And that thou mayeſt the better ſearch into this Myſtery, and ſee what thou art, I will try to undeceive thee in ſome of thy manifold Imperfections.

Thou art ſo quick and nice, that it may be if thou doſt but trip as thou walkeſt, or findeſt thy Way moleſted, thou feeleſt even Hell itſelf. If thou art denied thy Due, or thy Pleaſure oppoſed, thou preſently briſkeſt up with a warm Reſentment of it. If thou ſpieſt a Fault in thy Neighbour, inſtead of pitying him, and thinking that thou thyſelf art liable to the ſame failing, thou indiſcreet'y reproveſt him; if thou ſeeſt a Thing convenient for thee, and cannot compaſs it, thou groweſt ſad and full of Sorrow; if thou receiveſt a ſlight Injury from thy Neighbour, thou chideſt at him, and complaineſt for it, inſomuch, that for

for any Trifle thou art inwardly and outwardly diſcompoſed, and loſeſt thyſelf.

Thou wouldeſt be patient, but with another's Patience; and if the Impatience ſtill continues, thou layeſt the Fault with much Pains upon thy Companion, without conſidering, that thou art intolerable to thyſelf; and when the Rancour is over, thou cunningly doſt return to make thyſelf virtuous, giving Documents, and relating ſpiritual Sayings with Artifice of Wit, without mending thy paſt Faults. Although thou willingly doſt condemn thyſelf, reproving thy Faults before others, yet this thou doſt more to juſtify thyſelf with him that ſees thy Faults, that thou mayeſt return again afreſh to the former Eſteem of thyſelf, than through any Effect of perfect Humility.

Other Times thou doſt ſubtilly alledge, that it is not through Fault but Zeal of Juſtice, that thou complaineſt of thy Neighbour. Thou believeſt for the moſt Part that thou art virtuous, conſtant, and courageous, even to the giving up of thy Life into the Tyrant's Hand, ſolely for the Sake of divine Love; yet thou canſt ſcarce hear the leaſt Word of Anger, but preſently

preſently thou doſt afflict, and trouble, and diſquiet thyſelf. Theſe are all induſtrious Engines of Self-love, and the ſecret Pride of thy Soul. Know therefore, that Self-love reigns in thee, and from the purchaſing this precious Peace, that is thy greateſt Hindrance.

CHAP. X.

In which is ſhewed and diſcovered what is the falſe Humility; and what the the true; with the Effects of them.

THOU muſt know that there are two Sorts of Humility; one falſe and counterfeit, the other true. The falſe one is theirs, who, like Water, which muſt mount upward, receive an external Fall, and artificial Submiſſion, to riſe up again immediately. Theſe avoid Eſteem and Honour, that ſo they may be took to be humble: They ſay of themſelves, that they are very Evil, that they may be thought Good; and though they know their own Miſery, yet they are loth that other Folks ſhould

ſhould know it. This is diſſembled Humility, and feigned, and nothing but ſecret Pride.

Theirs is the true Humility, which have gotten a perfect Habit of it; theſe never think of it, but judge humbly of themſelves; they do Things with Courage and Patience; they live and die in God; they mind not themſelves nor the Creatures; they are conſtant and quiet in all Things; they ſuffer Moleſtation with Joy, deſiring more of it, that they may imitate their dear and deſpiſed Jesus; they covet to be reputed Trifles and Sport by the World; they are contented with what God allots them, and are convinced of their Faults with a pleaſing Shame; they are not humbled by the Counſel of Reaſon, but by the Affection of the Will; there is no Honour that they look after, nor Injury to diſturb them; no Trouble to vex them; no Proſperity to make them proud, becauſe they are always immoveable in their Nothing, and in themſelves with abſolute Peace.

And that thou mayeſt be acquainted with interior and true Humility, know, that it doth not conſiſt in external Acts, in

in taking the loweſt Place, in going poor in Clothes, in ſpeaking ſubmiſſively, in ſhutting the Eyes, in affectionate Sighings, nor in condemning thy Ways, calling thyſelf miſerable, to give others to underſtand that thou art humble: It conſiſts only in the Contempt of thyſelf, and the Deſire to be deſpiſed, with a low and profound Knowledge, without concerning thyſelf, whether thou art eſteemed humble or no, though an Angel ſhould reveal ſuch a Thing to thee.

The Torment of Light, wherewith the Lord with his Graces enlightens the Soul, doth two Things; it diſcovers the Greatneſs of God; and at the ſame Time the Soul knows its own Stench and Miſery, inſomuch that no Tongue is able to expreſs the Depth in which it is overwhelmed, being deſirous that every one ſhould know its Humility; and it is ſo far from Vain-glory and Complacency, as it ſees that Grace of God to be the mere Goodneſs of him, and nothing but his Mercy, which is pleaſed to take Pity on it.

Thou ſhalt never be hurt by Men or Devil, but by thyſelf, thy own proper Pride, and the Violence of thy Paſſions; take

take heed of thyſelf, for thou, of thyſelf, art the greateſt Devil of all to thyſelf.

Have no Mind to be eſteemed, when God incarnate was called Fool, Drunkard, and ſaid to have a Devil. O the Folly of Chriſtians! That we ſhould be willing to enjoy Happineſs, without being willing to imitate him on the Croſs, in Reproaches, Humility, Poverty, and in other Virtues!

The truly humbled Man is at reſt and eaſe in his Heart, there he ſtands the Trial of God and Men, and the Devil himſelf, above all Man's own Reaſon and Diſcretion, poſſeſſing himſelf in Peace and Quietneſs; looking for, with all Humility, the pure Pleaſure of God, as well in Life as Death: Things without do no more diſquiet him, than if they never were. The Croſs to him, and even Death itſelf, are Delights, though he make no ſuch Shew outwardly. But O who do we ſpeak of! For few there are of theſe Sort of humble Men in the whole World.

Hope thou, and deſire, and ſuffer, and die without any Body's knowing it; for herein conſiſts the humble and perfect Love.

Love. O how much Peace wilt thou find in thy Soul, if thou doſt profoundly humble thyſelf, and even hug Contempt?

Thou wilt never be perfectly humble, though thou knoweſt thy own Miſery, unleſs thou deſireſt all Men ſhould know it; then thou wilt avoid Praiſes, embrace Injuries, deſpiſe every Thing that makes a fair Shew, even to thine own ſelf; and if any Tribulation come upon thee, blame none for it, but judge that it comes from God's Hand, as the Giver of every Good.

If thou wouldeſt bear thy Neighbour's Faults, caſt thine Eye upon thine own: and if thou thinkeſt to thyſelf, that thou haſt made any Progreſs in Perfection by thyſelf, know that thou art not humble at all, nor haſt yet made one Step in the Way of the Spirit.

The Degrees of Humility, are the Qualities of a Body in the Grave; that is, to be in the loweſt Place, buried like one that is dead, to ſtink and be corrupted to itſelf, to be Duſt, and nothing in one's own Account: Finally, if thou wouldeſt

be bleſſed, learn to deſpiſe thyſelf, and to be deſpiſed by others.

CHAP. XI.

Maxims, to know a ſimple, humble, and true Heart.

ENcourage thyſelf to be humble, embracing Tribulations, as Inſtruments of thy Good; rejoice in Contempt, and deſire that GOD may be thy holy Refuge, Comfort and Protector.

None, let him be never ſo great in this World, can be greater than he that is in the Eye and Favour of GOD; and therefore the truly humble Man deſpiſes whatever there is in the World, even to himſelf, and puts his only Truſt and Repoſe in GOD.

The truly humble Man ſuffers quietly and patiently internal Troubles; and he is the Man that makes great Way in a little Time, like one that ſails before the Wind.

The

The truly humble Man finds God in all Things; ſo that whatever Contempt, Injury or Affronts come to him by Means of the Creatures, he receives it with great Peace and Quiet internal, as ſent from the divine Hand; and loves greatly the Inſtrument with which the Lord tries him.

He is not yet arrived at profound Humility, that is taken with Praiſe, though he does not deſire it, nor ſeek it, but rather avoids it: Becauſe, to an humble Heart, Praiſes are bitter Croſſes, although it be wholly quiet and immoveable.

He has no internal Humility, who doth not abhor himſelf, with a mortal, but withal a peaceable and quiet Hatred: But he will never come to poſſeſs this Treaſure, that has not a low and profound Knowledge of his own Vileneſs, Rottenneſs and Miſery.

He that is upon Excuſes and Replies, has not a ſimple and humble Heart, eſpecially if he does this with his Superiors; becauſe Replies grow from a ſecret Pride that reigns in the Soul, and from thence proceeds the total Ruin of it.

Perfidiouſneſs ſuppoſes little Submiſſion, and this leſs Humility; and both

together they are the Fuel of Inquietneſs, Diſcord and Diſturbance.

The humble Heart is not diſquieted by Imperfections, though theſe do grieve it to the Soul; becauſe they are againſt its loving Lord. Nor is he concerned that he cannot do great Things; for he always ſtands in his own Nothingneſs and Miſery; nay, he wonders at himſelf, that he can do any Thing of Virtue, and preſently thanks the Lord for it, with a true Knowledge that it is GOD that doth all, and remains diſſatisfied with what he does himſelf.

The truly humble Man, though he ſees all, yet he looks upon nothing to judge it, becauſe he judges ill only of himſelf.

The truly humble Man doth always find an Excuſe to defend him that mortifies him, at leaſt in a ſound Intention Who therefore would be angry with a Man of good Intention?

So much (nay more) doth falſe Humility diſpleaſe GOD, as true Pride does; becauſe that is Hypocriſy beſides.

The truly humble Man, though every Thing falls out contrary to him, is neither diſquieted nor afflicted by it; becauſe

cauſe he is prepared, and thinks he deſerves no leſs. He is not diſquieted under troubleſome Thoughts, wherewith the Devil ſeeks to torment him, nor under Temptations, Tribulations and Deſertions; but rather acknowledges his Unworthineſs, and is affected that the Lord chaſtiſes him by the Devil's Means, tho' he be a vile Inſtrument; all he ſuffers ſeems nothing to him, and he never doth a Thing that he thinks worth any great Matter.

He that is arrived at perfect and inward Humility, although he be diſturbed at nothing, as one that abhors himſelf, becauſe he knows his Imperfection in every Thing, his Ingratitude and his Miſery, yet he ſuffers a great Croſs in enduring himſelf. This is the Sign to know true Humility of Heart by. But the happy Soul, which is gotten to this holy Hatred of itſelf, lives overwhelmed, drowned, and ſwallowed up in the Depth of its own Nothingneſs; out of which the Lord raiſes him, by communicating divine Wiſdom to him, and filling him with Light, Peace, Tranquillity and Love.

CHAP. XII.

Inward Solitude is that which chiefly brings a Man to the purchaſe of internal Peace.

KNOW, that although exterior Solitude doth much aſſiſt for the obtaining internal Peace, yet the Lord did not mean this, when he ſpake by his Prophet, (*Hoſ.* ii. 14.) *I will bring her into Solitude, and ſpeak privately to her:* But he meant the interior Solitude, which jointly conduces to the obtaining the precious Jewel of Peace internal. Internal Solitude conſiſts in the forgetting of the Creatures, in diſengaging one's ſelf from them, in a perfect Nakedneſs of all the Affections, Deſires, Thoughts, and one's own Will. This is the true Solitude, where the Soul repoſes with a ſweet and inward Serenity in the Arms of its chiefeſt Good.

O what infinite Room is there in a Soul that is arrived at this divine Solitude! O what inward, what retired, what ſecret, what ſpacious, what vaſt Diſtances

are

are there within a happy Soul that is once come to be truly Solitary! There the Lord converſes, and communicates himſelf inwardly with the Soul; there he fills it with himſelf, becauſe it is empty; clothes it with Light and with his Love, becauſe it is naked; lifts it up, becauſe it is low; and unites it with himſelf; and transforms it, becauſe it is alone.

"O delightful Solitude, and Earneſt "of eternal Bleſſings! O Mirror, in "which the eternal Father is always be-"held! There is great Reaſon to call "thee *Solitude*; for thou art ſo much "alone, that there is ſcarce a Soul that "looks after thee, that loves and knows "thee. O divine Lord! How is it that "Souls do not go from Earth to this "Glory! How come they to loſe ſo "great a Good, through the only Love "and Deſire of created Things? Bleſſed "Soul, how happy wilt thou be, if thou "doſt but leave all for God! Seek him "only, breathe after none but him; let "him only have thy Sighs. Deſire no-"thing, and then nothing can trouble "thee; and if thou doſt deſire any "Good, how ſpiritual ſoever it be, let

" it be in ſuch a Manner, that thou " mayeſt not be diſquieted, if thou " miſſeſt it."

If, with this Liberty, thou wilt give thy Soul to GOD, taken off from the World, free and alone, thou wilt be the happieſt Creature upon Earth, becauſe the moſt High has his ſecret Habitation in this holy Solitude: In this Deſart and Paradiſe, is enjoyed the Converſation of GOD; and it is only in this internal Retirement that that marvellous, powerful, and divine Voice is heard.

If thou wouldeſt enter into this Heaven on Earth, forget every Care and every Thought; get out of thyſelf, that the Love of GOD may live in thy Soul.

Live as much as ever thou canſt abſtracted from the Creatures, dedicate thyſelf wholly to thy Creator, and offer thyſelf in Sacrifice with Peace and Quietneſs of Spirit. Know, that the more the Soul diſrobes itſelf, the more Way it makes into this interior Solitude, and becomes clothed with GOD; and the more loneſome and empty of itſelf the Soul gets to be, the more the divine Spirit fills it.

There

There is not a more bleſſed Life than a ſolitary one; becauſe in this happy Life, GOD gives himſelf all to the Creature, and the Creature all to GOD, by an intimate and ſweet Union and Love. O how few are there that come to reliſh this true Solitude!

To make the Soul truly Solitary, it ought to forget all the Creatures, and even itſelf; otherwiſe it will never be able to make any near Approach to GOD. Many Men leave and forſake all Things, but they do not leave their own Liking, their own Will, and themſelves; and therefore theſe truly ſolitary ones are ſo few. Wherefore, if the Soul does not get off from its own Appetite and Deſire, from its own Will, from ſpiritual Gifts, and from Repoſe even in the Spirit itſelf, it never can arrive at this high Felicity of internal Solitude.

Go on, bleſſed Soul! Go on without Stop, towards this Bleſſedneſs of internal Solitude: See how GOD calls thee to enter into thy inward Center, where he will renew thee, change thee, fill thee, clothe thee, and ſhew thee a new and heavenly Kingdom, full of Joy, Peace, Content and Serenity.

CHAP. XIII.

In which is ſhewed what infuſed and paſſive Contemplation is, and its wonderful Effects.

YOU muſt know, that when once the Soul is habituated to internal Recollection and acquired Contemplation, that we have ſpoken of; when once it is mortified, and deſires wholly to be denied its Appetites; when once it efficaciouſly embraces internal and external Mortification, and is willing to die heartily to its Paſſions and its own Ways, then GOD uſes to take it alone by itſelf, and raiſe it more than it knows to a compleat Repoſe, where he ſweetly and inwardly infuſes in it his Light, his Love, and his Strength, in kindling and inflaming it with a true Diſpoſition to all Manner of Virtue.

There the divine Spouſe, ſuſpending its Powers, puts it to ſleep in a moſt ſweet and pleaſant Reſt; there it ſleeps, and quietly receives and enjoys what it enjoys, with a moſt lovely and charming Calm; there the Soul, raiſed and lifted

up

up to this paſſive State, becomes united to its greateſt Good, without coſting it any Trouble or Pains for this Union: There, in that ſupreme Region, and ſacred Temple of the Soul, that greateſt Good takes its Complacency, manifeſts itſelf, and creates a Reliſh from the Creature, in a Way above Senſe and all human Underſtanding: There alſo only the pure Spirit, who is GOD (the Purity of the Soul being incapable of ſenſible Things) rules it, and gets the Maſterſhip of it, communicating to it its Illuſtrations, and thoſe Sentiments which are neceſſary for the moſt pure and perfect Union.

The Soul coming to itſelf again from theſe ſweet and divine Embracings, becomes rich in Light, and Love, and a mighty Eſteem of the divine Greatneſs, and the Knowledge of its own Miſery, finding itſelf all changed divinely, and diſpoſed to embrace, ſuffer, and to practice perfect Virtue.

A ſimple, pure, infuſed and perfect Contemplation therefore, is a known and inward Manifeſtation which GOD gives of himſelf, of his Goodneſs, of his Peace, of his Sweetneſs, whoſe Object is GOD,

pure,

pure, unſpeakable, abſtracted from all particular Thoughts, within an inward Silence: But it is God delightful, God that draws us, God that ſweetly raiſes us in a ſpiritual and moſt pure Manner; an admirable Gift which the divine Majeſty beſtows to whom he will, as he will, and when he will, and for what Time he will, though the State of this Life be rather a State of the Croſs, of Patience, of Humility and of Suffering, than of enjoying.

Never wilt thou enjoy this divine Nectar, till thou art advanced in Virtue and inward Mortifications; till thou doſt heartily endeavour to fix in thy Soul a great Peace, Silence, Forgetfulneſs, and internal Solitude; how is it poſſible to hear the ſweet, inward and powerful Voice of God in the Midſt of the Noiſe and Tumults of the Creatures? And how can the pure Spirit be heard in the midſt of Conſiderations and Diſcourſes of Artifice? If the Soul will not continually die in itſelf, denying itſelf to all theſe Materialities and Satisfactions, the Contemplation can be no more but a mere Vanity, a vain Complacency and Preſumption.

CHAP. XIV.

Purſues the ſame Matter.

GOD doth not always communicate himſelf with equal abundance in this ſweeteſt and infuſed Contemplation: Sometimes he grants this Grace more than he doth at other Times; and ſometimes he expects not that the Soul ſhould be ſo dead and denied, becauſe this Gift being his mere Grace, he gives it when he pleaſes, and as he pleaſes; ſo that no general Rule can be made of it, nor any Rate ſet to his divine Greatneſs; nay, by Means of this very Contemplation he comes to deny it, to annihilate and die.

Sometimes the Lord gives greater Light to the Underſtanding; ſometimes greater Love to the Will. There is no need here for the Soul to take any Pains or Trouble; it muſt receive what GOD gives it, and reſt united, as he will have it; becauſe his Majeſty is Lord, and in the very Time that he lays it aſleep, he poſſeſſes and fills it, and works in it powerfully and ſweetly, without any Induſtry or Knowledge of its own; inſomuch that before ever

ever it is aware of this ſo great Mercy, it is gained, convinced, and changed already.

The Soul which is in this happy State, hath two Things to avoid, the Activity of human Spirit, and Intereſtedneſs: Our human Spirit is unwilling to die in itſelf, but loveth to be doing and diſcourſing after its Way, being in love with its own Actions. A Man had need to have a great Fidelity, and, diveſting himſelf of Selfiſhneſs, to get a perfect and paſſive Capacity of the divine Influences; the continual Habits of operating freely, which it has, are a Hindrance to its Annihilation.

The Second is, Intereſtedneſs in Contemplation itſelf: Thou muſt therefore procure in thy Soul a perfect diveſting of all which is not God, without ſeeking any other End or Intereſt, within or without, but the divine Will.

In a Word, the Manner that thou muſt uſe on thy Part, to fit thyſelf for this pure, paſſive, and perfect Prayer, is a total and abſolute Conſignment of thyſelf into the Hands of God, with a perfect Submiſſion to his moſt holy Will, to be buſied according to his Pleaſure and Diſpoſition, receiving

receiving what he ordains thee, with an even and perfect Reſignation.

Thou muſt know, that few be the Souls which arrive at this infuſed and paſſive Prayer; becauſe few of them are capable of theſe divine Influences, with a total Nakedneſs, and Death of their own Activity and Powers: Thoſe only which feel it, know it ſo, that this perfect Nakedneſs is acquired (by the Help of God's Grace) by a continual and inward Mortification, dying to all its own Inclinations and Deſires.

At no Time muſt thou look at the Effects which are wrought in thy Soul, but eſpecially herein; becauſe it would be a Hindrance to the divine Operations which enrich it ſo to do; all that thou haſt to do, is to pant after Indifference, Reſignation, Forgetfulneſs; and, without thy being ſenſible of it, the greateſt Good will leave in thy Soul a fit Diſpoſition for the Practice of Virtue, a true Love of thy Croſs, of thy own Contempt, of thy Annihilation, and greater and ſtronger Deſires ſtill of thy greater Perfection, and the moſt pure and affective Union.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

Of the two Means whereby the Soul aſcends up to infuſed Contemplation, with the Explication of what and how many the Steps of it are.

THE Means whereby the Soul aſcends to the Felicity of Contemplation and affective Love, are two; the Pleaſure, and the Deſires of it. GOD uſes at firſt to fill the Soul with ſenſible Pleaſures, becauſe it is ſo frail and miſerable, that without this preventive Conſolation, it cannot take wing towards the Fruition of heavenly Things. In this firſt Step it is diſpoſed by Contrition, and is exerciſed in Repentance, meditating upon the Redeemer's Paſſion, rooting out diligently all worldly Deſires, and vicious Courſes of Life: Becauſe the Kingdom of Heaven ſuffers Violence, and the faint Heart, the delicate, never conquer it, but thoſe that uſe Violence and Force with themſelves.

The ſecond Means is the Deſires. The more the Things of Heaven are delighted in, the more they are deſired; and from thence there do enſue upon ſpiritual Pleaſures, Deſires of enjoying heavenly and divine

divine Bleſſings, and contempt of worldly ones. From theſe Deſires ariſe the Inclination of following CHRIST our Lord, who ſaid, *I am the Way*, John xiv. 6. the Steps of his Imitation by which a Man muſt go up, are *Charity*, *Humility*, *Meekneſs*, *Patience*, *Poverty*, *Self-Contempt*, the *Croſs*, *Prayer* and *Mortification*.

The Steps of infuſed Contemplation are three. The firſt is Satiety. When the Soul is filled with GOD, it conceives a Hatred to all worldly Things; then it is quiet, and ſatisfied only with divine Love. The ſecond is Intoxication. And this Step is an Exceſs of Mind, and an Elevation of Soul, ariſing from divine Love and Satiety of it. The third is Security. This Step turns out all Fear: The Soul is ſo drencht with Love divine, and reſigned up in ſuch a Manner to the divine good Pleaſure, that it would go willingly into Tribulation, if it did but know it ſo to be the Will of the moſt High. In this Step it feels ſuch a certain Bond of the divine Union, that it ſeems to it an impoſſible Thing to be ſeparated from its Beloved, and his infinite Treaſure.

There are ſix other Steps of Contemplation, which are theſe, *Fire*, *Union*, *Elevation*, *Illumination*, *Pleaſure* and *Repoſe*.

With

With the firſt the Soul is inkindled; and being inkindled, is anointed; being anointed, is raiſed; being raiſed, contemplates; contemplating, it receives Pleaſure; and receiving Pleaſure, it finds Repoſe. By theſe Steps the Soul riſes higher, being abſtracted and experienced in the ſpiritual and internal Way.

In the firſt Step, which is Fire, the Soul is illuſtrated by the Means of a divine and ardent Ray, Inkindling the Affections divine, and drying up thoſe which are but human. The ſecond, is the Unction, which is a ſweet and ſpiritual Liquor, which diffuſing itſelf all the Soul over, teaches it, ſtrengthens it, and diſpoſes it to receive and contemplate the divine Truth; and ſometimes it extends even to Nature itſelf, corroborating it by Patience, with a ſenſible Pleaſure that ſeems celeſtial.

The third is, the Elevation of the inner Man over itſelf, that it may get fitteſt to the clear Fountain of pure Love.

The fourth Step, which is Illumination, is an infuſed Knowledge, whereby the Soul contemplates ſweetly the divine Truth, riſing ſtill from one Clearneſs to another, from one Light to another, from Knowledge to Knowledge, being guided by the Spirit divine.

The

The fifth, is a ſavoury Pleaſure of the divine Sweetneſs, iſſuing forth from the plentiful and precious Fountain of the holy Ghoſt.

The ſixth, is a ſweet and admirable Tranquillity, ariſing from the Conqueſt of fighting within, and frequent Prayer; and this very very few have Experience of. Here the Abundance of Joy and Peace is ſo great, that the Soul ſeems to be in a ſweet Sleep, ſolacing and repoſing itſelf in divine Love.

CHAP. XVI.

Signs to know the inner Man, and the Mind that is purged.

THE Signs to know the inner Man by, are four: The firſt, if the Underſtanding produce no other Thoughts than thoſe which ſtir up to the Light of Faith; and the Will is ſo habituated, that it begets no other Acts of Love, than of God, and in order to him. The ſecond, if when he ceaſes from an external Work, in which he was employed, the Underſtanding and the Will are preſently and eaſily turned to God. The third, if in entering

entering upon Prayer, he forgets all outward Things, as if he had not ſeen nor uſed them. The fourth, if he carries himſelf orderly towards outward Things, as if he were entering into the World again, fearing to embroil himſelf in Buſineſs, and naturally abhorring it, unleſs when Charity requires it of him.

Such a Soul as this is free from the outward Man, and eaſier enters into the interior Solitude, where it ſees none but GOD, and itſelf in him; loving him with Quiet and Peace, and true Love. There, in that ſecret Center, GOD is kindly ſpeaking to it, teaching it a new Kingdom, and true Peace and Joy.

This ſpiritual, abſtracted, and retired Soul, hath its Peace no more broken, tho' outwardly it may meet with Combats; becauſe through the infinite Diſtance, Tempeſts do never reach to that ſereneſt Heaven within, where pure and perfect Love reſides; and though ſometimes it may be naked, forſaken, fought againſt, and deſolate, this is only the fury of the Storm, which threatens and rages no where but without.

This ſecret Love within hath four Effects: The firſt is called Illumination; which is a ſavoury and experimental Knowledge

Knowledge of the Greatneſs of God, and of its own Nothingneſs. The ſecond is Inflammation; which is an ardent Deſire of being burnt, like the Salamander, in this kind and divine Fire. The third is Sweetneſs, which is a peaceable, joyful, ſweet and intimate Fruition. The fourth is a ſwallowing up of the Powers in God; by which Immerſion the Soul is ſo much filled with God, that it cannot any longer ſeek, deſire, or will any Thing, but its greateſt and infinite Good.

From this fulleſt Satiety, two Effects ariſe: The firſt is a great Courage to ſuffer for God, the ſecond is a certain Hope or Aſſurance, that it can never loſe him, nor be ſeparated from him.

Here in this internal Retirement the beloved Jesus hath his Paradiſe, to whom we may go up, ſtanding and converſing on the Earth. And if thou deſireſt to know who he is, who is altogether drawn to this inward Retirement, with enlightened Exemplification in God, I tell thee, it is he that in Adverſity, in diſcomfort of Spirit, and in the Want of Neceſſaries, ſtands firm and unſhaken. Theſe conſtant and inward Souls are outwardly naked, and wholly infuſed in God; whom they continually do contemplate; they

have no Spot; they live in God, and of himself; they ſhine brighter than a thouſand Suns; they are beloved by the Son of God; they are the Darlings of God the Father, and elect Spouſes of the holy Ghoſt.

By three Signs is a Mind that is purged to be known. The firſt Sign is Diligence, which is a Strength of Mind that baniſhes all Neglect and Sloth, that it may be diſpoſed with Earneſtneſs and Confidence to the Purſuit of Virtue. The ſecond is Severity, which likewiſe is a Strength of Mind againſt Concupiſcence, accompanied with an ardent Love of Roughneſs, Vileneſs, and holy Poverty. The third is Benignity and Sweetneſs of Mind, which drives away all Rancour, Envy, Averſion and Hatred againſt one's Neighbour.

Till the Mind be purged, the Affection purified, the Memory naked, the Underſtanding brightned, the Will denied and ſet on Fire, the Soul can never arrive at the intimate and affective Union with God; and therefore, becauſe the Spirit of God is Purity itſelf, and Light and Reſt, the Soul (where he intends to make his Abode) muſt have great Purity, Peace, Attention and Quiet. Finally, the precious Gift of a purged Mind, thoſe only have, who with

with continual Diligence do ſeek, love, and retain it, and deſire to be reputed the moſt vile in the World.

CHAP. XVII.

Of Divine Wiſdom.

DIVINE Wiſdom is an intellectual and infuſed Knowledge of the divine Perfections and Things eternal; which ought rather to be called Contemplation than Speculation. Science is acquired, and begets the Knowledge of Nature; Wiſdom is infuſed, and begets the Knowledge of the divine Goodneſs; that deſires to know what is not to be attained unto without Pain and Sweat; this deſires not to know what it doth know, although it underſtands it all. In a Word, the Men who are ſcientifical, entertain themſelves in the Knowledge of the Things of the World; and the Wiſe live ſwallowed up in GOD himſelf.

Reaſon, enlightned in the Wiſe, is a high and ſimple Elevation of Spirit, whereby he ſees, with a clear and ſharp Sight, all that is inferior to him, and what concerns his Life and Eſtate. This

is that which renders the Soul ſimple, illuſtrated, uniform, ſpiritual, and altogether introverted; and abſtracted from every created Thing. This moves and draws away, with a ſweet Violence, the Hearts of the humble and teachable, filling them with Abundance of Sweetneſs, Peace and Pleaſantneſs. Finally, the wiſe Man ſays of it, that it brought him all good Things at once: *Venerunt mihi omnia bona pariter cum illa*, Wiſd. vii. 11.

You muſt know, that the greateſt Part of Men live by Opinion, and judge according to the Deceivableneſs of Imagination and Senſe; but the Man that is wiſe, judges of every Thing according to the real Verity which is in it; whoſe Buſineſs is, to underſtand, conceive, penetrate into, and tranſcend every created Being, even to himſelf.

It is a great Property in a wiſe Man, to do much, and ſay little.

Wiſdom is diſcovered in the Works and Words of the Wiſe; becauſe he being abſolute Maſter of all his Paſſions, Motions and Affections, is known in all his Doings, like a quiet and ſtill Water, in which Wiſdom ſhines with Clearneſs.

The Underſtanding of myſtical Truths is ſecret, and ſhut up from Men, who are purely

purely ſcholaſtical, unleſs they be humble; becauſe it is the Science of Saints, and none know it but thoſe who heartily love and ſeek their own Contempt. Therefore the Souls, who, by embracing this Means, get to be purely Myſtical, and truly humble, dive even into the profoundeſt Apprehenſions of the Divinity; and the more ſenſually Men do live, according to Fleſh and Blood, the greater Diſtance are they at from this Myſtical Science.

Ordinarily it is ſeen, that in the Man which hath much ſcholaſtical and ſpeculative Knowledge, divine Wiſdom doth not predominate; yet they make an admirable Compoſition when they both meet together. The Men of Learning, who by God's Mercy, have attained to this Myſtic Science, are worthy of Veneration.

The external Actions of the Myſtical and Wiſe, which they do rather paſſively than actively, though they are a great Trouble to them, yet are ordered prudently by them, by Number, Weight and Meaſure.

The Sermons of Men of Learning, who want the Spirit, though they are made up of divers Stories, elegant Deſcriptions, acute Diſcourſes, and exquiſite Proofs, yet are by no Means the Word

of God, but the Word of Men, plaited over with falſe Gold: Theſe Preachers ſpoil Chriſtians, feeding them with Vanity; and ſo they are, both of them, void of God.

Theſe Teachers feed their Hearers with the Wind of hurtful Subtilties, giving them Stones inſtead of Bread, Leaves inſtead of Fruit, and unſavoury Earth mixed with poiſoned Honey, inſtead of true Food. Theſe are they that hunt after Honour, raiſing up an Idol of Reputation and Applauſe, inſtead of ſeeking God's Glory, and the ſpiritual Edification of Men.

Thoſe that preach with Zeal and Sincerity, preach for God; thoſe that preach without them, preach for themſelves: Thoſe that preach the Word of God with Spirit, make it take Impreſſion in the Heart; but thoſe that preach it without Spirit, carry it no farther than to the Ear.

Perfection doth not conſiſt in teaching it, but in doing it; becauſe he is neither the greateſt Saint, nor the wiſeſt Man, that knows the Truth moſt, but he that practices it.

It is a conſtant Maxim, that divine Wiſdom begets Humility; and that which is acquired by the learned, begets Pride.

Holineſs does not conſiſt in forming deep and ſubtle Conceits of the Knowledge and Attributes of God, but in the Love of God, and in Self-denial. Therefore it is frequentlier obſerved, that Holineſs is more amongſt the Simple and Humble, than among the Learned. How many poor old Women are there in the World, which have little or nothing of human Science, but are rich in the Love of God! How many Divines do we ſee that are over Head and Ears in their vain Wiſdom, and yet very bare in Things of true Light and Charity!

Remember that it is always good to ſpeak like one that learns, and not like one that knows: Count it a greater Honour to be reputed a meer Ignoramus, than a Man of Wiſdom and Prudence.

However, the Learned, who are purely ſpeculative, have ſome little Sparks of Spirit, yet theſe do not fly out from the ſimple Bottom of eminent and divine Wiſdom, which hath a mortal Hatred to Forms and Species: The mixing of a little Science is always a Hindrance to the eternal, profound, pure, ſimple, and true Wiſdom.

CHAP. XVIII.

Treating of the ſame.

THERE are two Ways which lead to the Knowledge of GOD. The one remote, the other near: The firſt is called Speculation: the ſecond, Contemplation. The Learned, who follow ſcientifical Speculation by the Sweetneſs of ſenſible Diſcourſes, get up to GOD by this Means, as well as they can, that by this Help they may be able to love him: But none of thoſe who follow that Way which they call Scholaſtical, ever arrive by that only to the Myſtical Way, or to the Excellence of Union, Transformation, Simplicity, Light Peace, Tranquillity and Love, as he doth, who is brought, by the divine Grace, by the Myſtical Way of Contemplation.

Theſe Men of Learning, who are merely ſcholaſtical, do not know what the Spirit is, nor what it is to be loſt in GOD; nor are they come yet to the Taſte of the ſweet *Ambroſia*, which is in the inmoſt Depth and Bottom of the Soul, where it keeps its Throne, and communicates itſelf with incredible, intimate and delicious Affluence: Nay, ſome there are which do even

condemn

conde.nn this Myſtical Science, becauſe they neither do underſtand nor reliſh it.

The Divine who doth not taſte the Sweetneſs of Contemplation, has no other Reaſon to be given for it, but becauſe he enters not by the Gate which *Paul* points to, when he ſays, *Si quis inter vos videtur ſapiens eſſe, ſtultus fiat ut ſit ſapiens*, 1 Cor. iii. 18. "If any one among you ſeem to himſelf to be wiſe, let him become a Fool, that he may be wiſe; let him ſhew his Humility, by acknowledging himſelf ignorant."

It is a general Rule, and alſo a Maxim in Myſtic Theology, that the Practice ought to be gotten before the Theory. That there ought to be ſome experimental Exerciſe of ſupernatural Contemplation, before a Search of the Knowledge, and an Inquiry after the full Apprehenſion of it.

Although the Myſtical Science does commonly belong to the humble and ſimple, yet notwithſtanding that, Men of Learning are not incapable of it, if they do not ſeek themſelves; nor ſet any great Value upon their own artificial Knowledge; but more, if they can forget it, as if they never had it, and only make uſe of it in its own proper Place and Time, for preaching and diſputing when their

Turn comes, and afterwards give their Minds to the ſimple and naked Contemplation of God, without Form, Figure or Conſideration.

The Study, which is not ordered for God's Glory only, is but a ſhort Way to Hell; not through the Study, but the Wind of Pride, which begets it. Miſerable is the greateſt Part of Men at this Time, whoſe only Study is to ſatisfy the unſatisfiable Curioſity of Nature.

Many ſeek God, and find him not; becauſe they are more moved by Curioſity, than ſincere, pure, and upright Intention: They rather deſire ſpiritual Comforts, than God himſelf; and as they ſeek him not with Truth, they neither find God, nor ſpiritual Pleaſures.

He that does not endeavour the total denying of himſelf, will not be truly abſtracted; and ſo can never be capable of the Truth, and the Light of the Spirit. To go towards the Myſtical Science, a Man muſt never meddle with Things which are without, but with Prudence, and in that which his Office calls him to. Rare are the Men who ſet a higher Price upon hearing than ſpeaking: But the wiſe and purely Myſtical Man, never ſpeaks but when he cannot help it; nor doth he concern himſelf in any Thing, but what

belongs to his Office, and then he carries himſelf with great Prudence.

The Spirit of divine Wiſdom fills Men with Sweetneſs, governs them with Courage, and enlightens thoſe with Excellence who are ſubject to its Direction. Where the divine Spirit dwells, there is always Simplicity, and a holy Liberty. But Craft and Double-Mindedneſs, Fiction, Artifices, Policy, and worldly Reſpects, are Hell itſelf, to wiſe and ſincere Men.

Know, that he who would attain to the Myſtical Science, muſt be denied and taken off from five Things: Firſt, from the Creatures. Secondly, from temporal Things. Thirdly, from reſting in the very Gifts of the holy Ghoſt. Fourthly, from himſelf. Fifthly, he muſt be loſt in God. This laſt is the completeſt of all; becauſe that Soul only, that knows how to be ſo taken off, is that which attains to being loſt in God, and only knows where to be in Safety.

God is more ſatisfied with the Affection of the Heart, than that of worldly Science. It is one Thing to cleanſe the Heart of all that which captivates and pollutes it, and another Thing to do a thouſand Things, though good and holy, without minding that Purity of Heart,

which is the Main of all for attaining of divine Wiſdom.

Never wilt thou get to this ſovereign and divine Wiſdom, if thou haſt not Strength, when God cleanſeth thee in his own Time, not only of thy Adherences to temporal and natural Bleſſings, but further, to ſupernatural and ſublime ones, ſuch as internal Communications, Extaſies, Raptures, and other gratuitous Graces, whereon the Soul reſts and entertains itſelf.

Many Souls come ſhort of arriving to quiet Contemplation, to divine Wiſdom, and true Knowledge, notwithſtanding that they ſpend many Hours in Prayer, and receive the Sacrament every Day; becauſe they do not ſubject and ſubmit themſelves wholly and entirely to him that hath Light, nor deny and conquer themſelves, nor give up themſelves totally to God, with a perfect diveſting and diſintereſting of themſelves: In a Word, till the Soul be purified in the Fire of inward Pain, it will never get to a State of Renovation, of Transformation, of perfect Contemplation, of divine Wiſdom, and affective Union.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

Of true and perfect Annihilation.

THOU muſt know that all this Fabrick of Annihilation hath its Foundation but in two Principles. The firſt is, to keep one's ſelf and all worldly Things in a low Eſteem and Value; from whence the putting in Practice of this Self-diveſting, and of Self-renunciation, and forſaking all created Things, muſt have its riſe, and that with Affection, and in deed. The ſecond Principle muſt be a great Eſteem of GOD, to love, adore and follow him without the leaſt Intereſt of one's own, let it be never ſo holy. From theſe two Principles ſtill ariſe a full Conformity to the divine Will. This powerful and practical Conformity to the divine Will in all Things, leads the Soul to Annihilation and Transformation with GOD, without the Mixture of Raptures, or external Extaſies, or vehement Affections: This Way being liable to many Illuſions, with the Danger of Weakneſs, and Anguiſh of the Underſtanding, by which Path there is ſeldom any that gets up to the Top of Perfection, which is acquired by the other ſafe, firm and real Way,

though not without a weighty Croſs; becauſe therein the high Way of Annihilation and Perfection is founded; which is ſeconded by many Gifts of Light, and divine Effects, and infinite other Graces, *Gratis datæ*: Yet the Soul that is annihilated muſt be unclothed of it all, if it would not have them be a Hindrance to it in its Way to Glorification.

As the Soul makes continual Progreſs from its own meanneſs, it ought to walk on to the Practice of Annihilation, which conſiſts in the abhorring Honour, Dignity, and Praiſe; there being no Reaſon that Dignity and Honour ſhould be given to Vileneſs, and a mere Nothingneſs.

To the Soul that is ſenſible of its own Vileneſs, it appears an impoſſible Thing to deſerve any Thing; it is rather confounded, and knows itſelf unworthy of Virtue and Praiſe; it embraces with equal Courage all Occaſions of Contempt, Perſecution, Infamy, Shame, and Affront, and as truly deſerving of ſuch Reproaches; it renders the Lord Thanks, when it lights upon ſuch Occaſions, to be treated as it deſerves; and knows itſelf alſo unworthy that he ſhould uſe his Juſtice upon it; but above all, it is glad of Contempt and

Affront,

Affront, becauſe it is GOD gets great Glory by it.

Such a Soul as this, always chooſes the loweſt, the vileſt, and the moſt deſpiſed Degree, as well of Place, as of Clothing, and of all other Things, without the leaſt Affectation of Singularity; being of the Opinion, that the greateſt Vileneſs is beyond its Deſerts, and acknowledging itſelf alſo unworthy even of this. This is the Practice that brings the Soul to a true Annihilation of itſelf.

The Soul that would be perfect, begins to mortify its Paſſions; and when it is advanced in that Exerciſe, it denies itſelf; then, with the divine Aid, it paſſes to the State of Nothingneſs, where it deſpiſes, abhors, and plunges itſelf upon the Knowledge that it is nothing, that it can do nothing, and that it is worth nothing: From hence ſprings the dying in itſelf, and in its Senſes, in many Ways, and at all Hours; and finally, from this ſpiritual Death, the true and perfect Annihilation derives its Original; inſomuch, that when the Soul is once dead to its Will and Underſtanding, it is properly ſaid to be arrived at the perfect and happy State of Annihilation, which is the laſt Diſpoſition for Tranſformation and Union, which

the Soul itſelf doth not underſtand, becauſe it would not be annihilated if it ſhould come to know it: And although it do get to this happy State of Annihilation, yet it muſt know, that it muſt walk ſtill on, and muſt be further and further purified and annihilated.

You muſt know, that this Annihilation, to make it perfect in the Soul, muſt be in a Man's own Judgment, in his Will, in his Works, Inclinations, Deſires, Thoughts, and in itſelf; ſo that the Soul muſt find itſelf dead to its Will, Deſire, Endeavour, Underſtanding, and Thought; willing, as if it did not will; deſiring, as if it did not deſire; underſtanding, as if it did not underſtand; thinking, as if it did not think, without inclining to any Thing; embracing equally Contempts and Honours, Benefits and Corrections. O what a happy Soul is that which is thus dead and annihilated! It lives no longer in itſelf, becauſe GOD lives in it: And now it may moſt truly be ſaid of it, that it is a renewed Phœnix, becauſe it is changed, ſpiritualized, and transformed into the divine Image.

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

In which is ſhewed, how this Nothing is the ready Way to obtain Purity of Soul, perfect Contemplation, and the rich Treaſure of Peace internal.

THE Way to attain that high State of a Mind reformed, whereby a Man immediately gets to the greateſt Good, to our firſt Original, and to the higheſt Peace, is his Nothingneſs. Endeavour, O Soul, to be always buried in that Miſery. This Nothing, and this acknowledged Miſery, is the Means whereby the Lord works Wonders in thy Soul. Clothe thyſelf with this Nothing, and with this Miſery; and ſee that this Miſery and this Nothing be thy continual Food and Habitation, even to the caſting down thyſelf low therein; and then I aſſure thee, that thou being in that Manner, the Nothing, the Lord will be the whole in thy Soul.

Why, thinkeſt thou, do infinite Souls hinder the abundant Current of the divine Gifts? It is only becauſe they would be doing ſomething, and have a Deſire to be great; all this is to come away from internal Humility, and from their own Nothing; and therefore they prevent thoſe Wonders which that infinite Goodneſs

would work in them: They betake themſelves to the very Gifts of the Spirit, and there they ſtick, that they may come out from the Center of Nothing, and ſo the whole Work is ſpoiled. They ſeek not God with Truth, and therefore they find him not: For, know thou muſt, that there is no finding of him, but in the undervaluing of our own ſelves, and in Nothing.

We ſeek ourſelves every Time we get out of our Nothing; and therefore we never get to quiet and perfect Contemplation. Creep in, as far as ever thou canſt, into the Truth of thy Nothing, and then nothing will diſquiet thee; nay, thou wilt be humble and aſhamed, loſing openly thy own Reputation and Eſteem.

O what a ſtrong Bulwark wilt thou find of that Nothing! Who can ever afflict thee, if once thou doſt retire into that Fortreſs? Becauſe the Soul which is deſpiſed by itſelf, and in its own Knowledge, is Nothing, is not capable of receiving Grievance or Injury from any Body. The Soul which keeps within its Nothingneſs, is internally ſilent, lives reſigned in any Torment whatſoever, by thinking it leſs than what it doth deſerve: It ſhuns the Suſpicion of a Neighbour, never looks at other Peoples Faults, but its own; is free

from

ſom abundance of Imperfections, and becomes Commander of great Virtue. Whilſt the Soul keeps ſtill and quiet in its Nothingneſs, it perfects it, it enriches it, the Lord draws his own Image and Likeneſs in it, without any Thing to hinder it.

By the Way of Nothing thou muſt come to loſe thyſelf in God (which is the laſt Degree of Perfection) and happy wilt thou be, if thou canſt ſo loſe thyſelf; then thou wilt get thyſelf Gain, and find thyſelf moſt certainly. In this ſame Shop of Nothing, Simplicity is made; interior and infuſed Recollection is poſſeſſed, Quiet is obtained, and the Heart is cleanſed from all Manner of Imperfection. O what a Treaſure wilt thou find, if thou ſhalt once fix thy Habitation in Nothing! And if thou once getteſt but ſnug into the Center of Nothing, thou wilt never concern thyſelf with any Thing that is without, (the great Step, that ſo many thouſand Souls do ſtumble at) unleſs it be as thy Office may call thee to it.

If thou doſt but get ſhut up in Nothing, (where the Blows of Adverſity can never come) nothing will vex thee, or break thy Peace. This is the Way of getting to the command of thyſelf, becauſe perfect and true Dominion do only govern in Nothing;

thing; with the Helmet of Nothing thou wilt be too hard for ſtrong Temptations, and the terrible Suggeſtions of the envious Enemy.

Knowing that thou art nothing, that thou canſt do nothing, and art worth juſt nothing, thou wilt quietly embrace paſſive Dryneſſes, thou wilt endure horrible Deſolations, thou wilt undergo ſpiritual Afflictions and inward Torments. By Means of this Nothing thou muſt die in thyſelf, many Ways, at all Times, and all Hours.

Who muſt awaken the Soul out of that ſweet and pleaſant Sleep, if once it comes to take a Reſt in Nothing? This is the Way that *David* got to perfect Annihilation, without ſo much as knowing it: *Ad nihilum redactus ſum & neſcivi*, Pſal. xvii. Keeping thyſelf in Nothing, thou wilt bar the Door againſt every Thing that is not of GOD; thou wilt retire alſo from thine own ſelf, and walk towards that internal Solitude, where the divine Spouſe ſpeaks in the Heart of his Bride, teaching her high and divine Wiſdom. Drown thyſelf in this Nothing, and there ſhalt thou find a holy Sanctuary againſt any Tempeſt whatſoever.

By this Way muſt thou return to the happy State of Innocency, forfeited by our firſt Parents. By this Gate thou muſt

enter into the happy Land of the Living, where thou wilt find the greateſt Good, the Breadth of Charity, the Beauty of Righteouſneſs, the ſtrait Line of Equity and Juſtice; and in ſum, every Jot and Tittle of Perfection. Laſtly, look at nothing, deſire nothing, will nothing, nor endeavour nothing; and then, in every Thing, thy Soul will live repoſed with Quiet and Enjoyment.

This, this is the Way to get Purity of Soul, perfect Contemplation, and Peace internal: Walk therefore in this ſafe Path, and endeavour to overwhelm thyſelf in this Nothing, endeavour to loſe thyſelf, to ſink deep into it, if thou haſt a Mind to be annihilated, united and transformed.

CHAP. XXI.

Of the high Felicity of internal Peace, and the wonderful Effects of it.

THE Soul being once annihilated and renewed with perfect Nakedneſs, finds in its ſuperior Part a profound Peace, and a ſweet Reſt, which brings it to ſuch a perfect Union of Love, that it is joyful all over: And ſuch a Soul as this,

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is already arrived to ſuch a Happineſs, that it neither wills nor deſires any Thing but what its Beloved wills; it conforms itſelf to his Will in all Emergencies, as well in Comfort as Anguiſh, and rejoices alſo in every Thing to do the divine good Pleaſure.

There is nothing but what comforts it; nor doth it want any Thing, but what it can well want: To die, is Enjoyment to it; and to live, is its Joy: It is as contented here upon Earth, as it can be in Paradiſe; it is as glad under Privation, as it can be in Poſſeſſion; in Sickneſs, as it can be in Health; becauſe it knows that this is the Will of its Lord. This is its Life, this its Glory, its Paradiſe, its Peace, its Repoſe, its Reſt, its Conſolation, and higheſt Happineſs.

If it were neceſſary to ſuch a Soul as this, which is gotten up by the Step of Annihilation to the Region of Peace, to make its choice, it would chooſe Deſolation, before Comfort; Contempt, before Honour; becauſe the loving JESUS made great Eſteem of Reproach and Pain; if it firſt endured the hunger of the Bleſſings of Heaven, if it thirſted for GOD, if it had the Fear of loſing Him; the Lamentation of Heart, and the Fighting of the Devil:

Devil: Now Things are altered, and Hunger is turned into Satisfying, the Thirſt into Satiety, the Fear into Aſſurance, the Sadneſs into Joy, and the fierce Fighting into the greateſt Peace. O happy Soul, that enjoys here on Earth ſo great a Felicity! Thou muſt know, that theſe kind of Souls (though few they are) be the ſtrong Pillars which ſupport the Church, and ſuch as abate the divine Indignation.

And now this Soul, that is entred into the Heaven of Peace, acknowledges itſelf full of God and his ſupernatural Gifts; becauſe it lives grounded in a pure Love, receiving equal Pleaſure in Light and Darkneſs, in Night and Day, in Affliction and Conſolation: Through this holy and heavenly Indifferency, it never loſes its Peace in Adverſity, nor its Tranquillity in Tribulation, but ſees itſelf full of unſpeakable Enjoyments.

And although the Prince of Darkneſs makes all the Aſſaults of Hell againſt it, with horrible Temptations, yet it makes Head againſt them, and ſtands like a ſtrong Pillar; no more happening to it by them, than happens to a high Mountain, and a deep Valley, in the Time of Storm and Tempeſt.

The Valley is darkned with thick Clouds,

Clouds, fierce Tempeſts of Hail, Thunder, Lightning and Hailſtones, which looks like the Picture of Hell; at the ſame Time the lofty Mountain glitters, by the bright Beams of the Sun, in Quietneſs and Serenity, continuing clear like Heaven, immoveable, and full of Light.

The ſame happens to this bleſſed Soul: the Valley of the Part below, is, ſuffering Tribulations, Combats Darkneſs, Deſolations, Torments; and at the ſame Time, on the lofty Mountain of the higher Part of the Soul, the true Sun caſts its Beams; it enflames and enlightens it and ſo it becomes clear, peaceable, reſplendent, quiet, ſerene, being a mere Ocean of Joy.

So gteat therefore is the Quiet of this pure Soul, which is gotten up the Mountain of Tranquillity, ſo great is the Peace of its Spirit, ſo great the Serenity and Chearfulneſs that is within, that a remnant and glimmering of GOD does redound even to the outſide of it.

Becauſe in the Throne of Quiet are manifeſt the Perfections of ſpiritual Beauty; here the true Light of the ſecret and divine Myſteries of our holy Faith, here perfect Humility, even to the Annihilation of itſelf, the ampleſt Reſignation, Chaſtity, Poverty of Spirit, the Sincerity and Innocency

Innocency of the Dove, external Modeſty, Silence and internal Solitude, Liberty, and Purity of Heart; here the Forgetfulneſs of every created Thing, even of itſelf, joyful Simplicity, heavenly Indifferency, continual Prayer, a total Nakedneſs, perfect Diſintereſtedneſs, a moſt wiſe Contemplation, a Converſation of Heaven: and laſtly, the moſt perfect and ſerene Peace within; of which this happy Soul may ſay what the wiſe Man ſaid of Wiſdom, that all other Graces came along in Company with her: *Venerunt mihi omnia bona paritur cum illa*, Wiſd. xvii. 11.

This is the rich and hidden Treaſure; this is the loſt Groat of the Goſpel; this is the bleſſed Life, the happy Life, the true Life, and the Bleſſedneſs here below.

O thou lovely Greatneſs, that paſſeſt the Knowledge of the Sons of Men! O excellent ſupernatural Life, how admirable and unſpeakable art thou, for thou art the very Draught of Bleſſedneſs! O how much doſt thou raiſe a Soul from Earth, which loſes in its View all Things of the Vileneſs of Earth! Thou art poor to look upon, but inwardly thou art full of Wealth; thou ſeemeſt low, but art exceeding high; in a Word, thou art that which makeſt Men live a Life divine here below. Give

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me, O Lord, thou greateſt Goodneſs, give me a good Portion of this heavenly Happineſs and true Peace, that the World, ſenſual as it is, is neither capable of underſtanding nor receiving. *Quem Mundus non poteſt accipere.*

CHAP. XXII.

A mournful Exclamation, and lamentable Moan to God, for the ſmall Company of Souls that arrive at Perfection, the loving Union, and the divine Transformation.

O Divine Majeſty, in whoſe Preſence the Pillars of Heaven do quake and tremble! O thou Goodneſs infinite, in whoſe Love the Seraphims burn! Give me leave, O Lord, to lament our Blindneſs and Ingratitude: We all live in Miſtakes, ſeeking the fooliſh World, and forſaking thee, who art our GOD: We all forſake thee, the Fountain of living Waters, for the ſtinking Dirt of the World.

O we Children of Men! How long ſhall we follow after Lying and Vanity? Who is it that hath thus deceived us, that we ſhould forſake GOD, our greateſt Good? Who

Who is it that ſpeaks the moſt Truth to us? Who is it that loves us moſt? Who defends us moſt? Who is it that doth more to ſhew himſelf a Friend? Who more tender to ſhew himſelf a Spouſe, and moſt good to be a Father? That our Blindneſs ſhould be ſo great, that we ſhould all forſake this greateſt and infinite Goodneſs.

O divine Lord! What a few Souls are there in the World which do ſerve thee with Perfection! How ſmall is the Number of thoſe who are willing to ſuffer, that they may follow CHRIST crucified, that they may embrace the Croſs, that they may deny and contemn themſelves! O what a ſcarcity of Souls are there which are diſintereſted and totally naked! How few are thoſe Souls which are dead to themſelves, and alive to GOD, which are totally reſigned to his divine good Pleaſure! How few thoſe who are adorned with ſimple Obedience, profound Knowledge of themſelves, and true Humility! How few thoſe, which with an intire Indifference give up themſelves into the Hands of GOD, to do what he pleaſes with them! How few are there of thoſe pure Souls which be of a ſimple and diſintereſted Heart, and which, putting off their own Underſtanding, Knowledge, Deſire and Will, do long

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for Self-denial and ſpiritual Death! O what a ſcarcity of Souls is there which are willing to let the divine Creator work in them a Mind to ſuffer, that they may reign; and to die, that they may live! How few are the Souls which are willing to forget themſelves, to free their Hearts from their own Affections, their own Deſires, their own Satisfactions, their own Love and Judgments! That are willing to be led by the high Way of Self-denial and the internal Way! That are willing to be annihilated, dying to themſelves and their Senſes! That are willing to let themſelves be emptied, purified and unclothed, that God may fill, and clothe, and perfect them! In a Word, how ſmall, O Lord, is the Number of thoſe Souls which are blind, deaf and dumb, and perfectly contemplative!

O the Shame of us the Children of *Adam!* Who for a Thing of mere Vileneſs, do deſpiſe true Felicity, and hinder our greateſt Good, the rich Treaſure and infinite Goodneſs! Great Reaſon has Heaven to lament, that there are ſo few Souls to follow its precious Path-way. *Viæ* Sion *lugent, eo quod non ſint qui veniant ad ſolemnitatem,* Lam. i. 4.

FINIS.